MARCH 1963

# Commentary

## THE CRISIS IN THE WESTERN ALLIANCE

### Two Views

HANS J. MORGENTHAU / GRAHAM HUTTON

**MY FATHER'S SON:** Mark Harris

**THE POLISH MIRACLE:** R. H. S. Crossman

**EPISTLES FROM THE EISENHOWER AGE:** Murray Kempton

A Story

**FAIGELE THE IDIOTKE:** Jerome Charyn

Observations

**NEW LEFT MARXISM:** George Lichtheim

**PEOPLE GET HOOKED:** R. S. Baker

Books in Review

Lewis A. Coser Robert Alter Paul Breslow

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# Commentary

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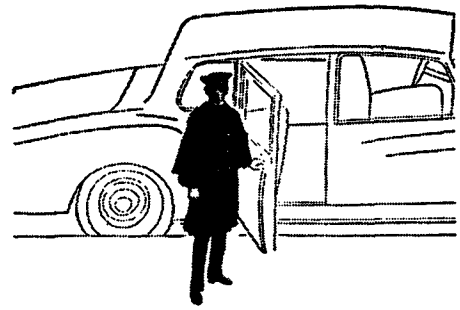

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# THE CRISIS IN THE WESTERN ALLIANCE

## *I. An American View: Hans J. Morgenthau*

## *II. A British View: Graham Hutton*

HANS J. MORGENTHAU, *Director of the Center for the Study of American Foreign and Military Policy at the University of Chicago, contributes bi-monthly comments on political affairs to these pages.* GRAHAM HUTTON *is a British economist who lives in London and is a director of Hutton Economic Services Ltd. He was formerly Assistant Editor of* The Economist *and for a time served as head of British Information Services in Chicago.*

### Hans J. Morgenthau:

> Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

FOR A CENTURY and a half, we accepted, and acted upon, this formulation of our relations with Europe which Washington's Farewell Address gave us. Our interventions in the two World Wars we considered at the time as temporary exceptions to the rule of non-involvement, justified by "extraordinary" vicissitudes, combinations, and collisions. But in the spring of 1947, we radically changed the conception and course of our foreign policy by identifying our interests with those of Europe in what we thought was virtual permanence through the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan and the military containment of the Soviet Union.

Since then, Europeans have from time to time expressed their fear that we might again come to define our interests differently from theirs and go back into isolation. It was for us to reassure them. Now Europe is turning George Washington's formulation against us and proclaiming the separateness of its interests from those of America. I have advisedly attributed this proclamation to "Europe" and not to Charles de Gaulle alone; for de Gaulle has but given trenchant and uncompromising expression to a mood and trend which is by no means limited to the French leader.

It is revealing that both de Gaulle and Macmillan justify their contradictory positions as furthering the emancipation of Europe from America. De Gaulle opposes British membership in the Common Market because it would lead to the formation of "a colossal Atlantic Community under American dependence and leadership" (press conference of January 14, 1963). Macmillan, on the other hand, insists on British membership because only so can Europe become "great and strong enough to build a more equal and worthy partnership" with the United States (speech at Liverpool on January 21, 1963) and anticipates that the alliance would end if the



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United States were allowed "for all time the sole authority" over the nuclear deterrent (broadcast of January 30, 1963). Macmillan, having just been expelled from Europe by de Gaulle and having to choose between a far-from-splendid isolation and utter dependence upon the United States, cannot refrain from paying tribute to the emancipation of Europe while being careful to stress the American connection. De Gaulle, on the other hand, thinks he can afford to declare the independence of Europe from America in so many words and to make it perfectly clear to us that what he wants is the exact opposite from what we want.

We have responded to that declaration with surprise and indignation. While no American spokesman has gone so far as to suggest, as did the London *Economist* on January 26, that de Gaulle's scheme was "demented," we have certainly confirmed the point which the distinguished Italian paper *Giornale d'Italia* made on January 22 when it said that "It is perhaps easier to criticize de Gaulle than to understand him." De Gaulle's policy may well be wrong in that it will either prove unsuccessful or, if it should succeed, detrimental to France. It may also run counter to the interests of the United States and must therefore be opposed by American policy. Yet whatever one's conclusions are, they ought to derive not from emotional reactions but from a rational understanding of what de Gaulle is after. Whatever his chances for success may be and in whatever ways his success or failure may affect the interests of France and the United States, de Gaulle's design is rational in itself and not devoid of audacity and even grandeur. That much is obvious from a dispassionate examination of de Gaulle's press conference of January 14—put into the context of his general political philosophy—and from certain interviews he held with prominent Frenchmen, especially in the military field, during the week following that press conference.

De Gaulle's European policy derives from five basic propositions, which are not peculiar to France but are of general validity.

First, an alliance among nations unequal in power inevitably gives the most powerful nation a decisive voice in determining the policies of the alliance. This fact of political life, which Machiavelli recognized when in Chapter 21 of *The Prince* he warned weak nations against making alliances with strong ones except by necessity, can be obscured, but cannot be eliminated, by talk about "interdependence" and "equal partnership." "Interdependence" means for the weak to be dependent upon the strong, and there can be no equality among those who are unequal in the qualities that count in the political scales.

Second, this dependence is tolerable for the weak only if there exists so complete an identity of interests between the weak and the strong that the policies pursued by the strong in their own interests also serve the interests of the weak. Such identity of interests is rare in peace and cannot even be taken for granted in war. It exists among the members of the Atlantic Alliance only on the most general plane: the Atlantic Alliance is united in its opposition to Communist aggression and subversion. But this interest is not a policy in itself; it must be implemented by common policies. Such policies, to which all members of the Alliance are committed, do not at present exist.

It is striking that of the outstanding issues that face the Atlantic Alliance, there is not a single one on which all members of the Alliance see eye to eye. The United States stands alone in its policies *vis-à-vis* China, South Vietnam, and Cuba. In the Congo it had the support of neither Great Britain nor France. In the rest of Africa, the allies go their separate ways. With regard to Berlin: Great Britain, on the one hand, and West Germany and France, on the other, have taken contradictory positions, while the United States, after a

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period of vacillation, has ended up in the Franco-German camp. The same observation applies to the German question as a whole and the over-all relations between the West and the Soviet Union: in view of irreconcilable divergences of interest and policies, abstention from initiative and a passive commitment to the status quo have been the order of the day. The policies of the United States and France toward the United Nations are diametrically opposed, with Great Britain taking an intermediate position. A similar cleavage separates France from the United States and Great Britain in the field of disarmament. As concerns military strategy and the policies implementing it, the United States is at loggerheads with its major European allies on two basic questions: the role of conventional forces and the disposition of nuclear weapons.

The third of the five propositions on which de Gaulle's European policy rests is that the availability of nuclear weapons to the United States and the Soviet Union has administered a death blow to the Atlantic Alliance, as it has to all alliances. It has made alliances obsolete. In the prenuclear age, a powerful nation could be expected to come to the aid of a weak ally provided its interests were sufficiently involved, risking at worst defeat in war, the loss of an army or of territory. But no nation can be relied upon to forfeit its own existence for the sake of another. Thus the same doubt about American intentions which deters Khrushchev disheartens de Gaulle. Khrushchev cannot be sure that the United States would not be willing to blow itself up over Berlin, and hence is deterred. De Gaulle cannot be sure that the United States would be willing to blow itself up over a vital interest of France, and hence is disheartened.

The independent national nuclear deterrent, then, becomes the substitute for obsolete alliances. Since no nation can be expected to risk destruction for the sake of another nation, all nations must protect themselves as best they can. While France could not hope to match the deterrent of a major nuclear power quantitatively, she is capable of developing an invulnerable deterrent sufficient for her purposes. She could say to a major nuclear power: If you do this I shall cut off your leg. And the major nuclear power could reply: If you do that I shall kill you. But is it likely that an issue might arise between France and a major nuclear power for the sake of which the latter would be willing to risk losing a leg?

FOURTH, what has been said of alliances also applies to federations of states. Strong and weak nations can federate effectively only on a hierarchical and not an equalitarian basis. Here de Gaulle's conception is not so much Napoleonic as it is Bismarckian. That is to say, he applies to the unification of Europe the same principles through which Bismarck united Germany a century ago. Bismarck had two choices: the "greater German" solution including Austria, or the "little German" solution excluding her. Bismarck rejected the former solution on two major grounds: Austria would have been a rival to the predominance of Prussian power, and her imperial interests stood in the way of a full commitment to the German cause.

The unification of Germany in 1871, dominated by Prussia and excluding Austria, was preceded by two international organizations: the German Confederation established in 1815 under the leadership of Austria and composed of thirty-eight sovereign German-speaking nations, and the German Customs Union established in 1819 by Prussia. Prussia was able to thwart Austria's attempts to join the Customs Union or to break it up, and by 1853 the Union comprised all German states with the exception of Austria. On the other hand, Prussia's attempt in 1849 to unite Germany politically under her leadership, with the Austro-Hungarian monarchy occupying an associate position, was frustrated by Austria in the so-

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called "Punctation of Olmütz." The defeat of Austria by Prussia in the war of 1866 led to the dissolution of the German Confederation and its replacement in 1867 by the North German Confederation under Prussian domination. The South German states rejoined the Customs Union and sent representatives to an all-German customs parliament. This process of exclusion and integration culminated in 1871 in the so-called "little German" solution of the German problem, the establishment of a German Reich under the dominance of Prussia and without Austria, in the aftermath of the victorious war against France in which all German states except Austria participated.

In de Gaulle's design, the nucleus of Franco-German power takes the place of Prussia, Great Britain takes the place of Austria, and now as then economic arrangements are used as means for serving political ends. Faced with a similar choice, de Gaulle follows Bismarck's example and prefers a "little European" solution excluding Great Britain to a "greater European" one including her. De Gaulle sees himself choosing between a Europe dominated by the United States and a Europe dominated by the Franco-German combination. He sees Great Britain not only as the spearhead of American power but also as a non-European influence within Europe by virtue of its worldwide interests and commitments. Furthermore, the British presence in Europe would endanger the viability of the Franco-German combination; for the British political presence could offer Germany an alternative to the association with France and threaten France with isolation. In other words, it would be a threat to the predominance of France.

LASTLY, de Gaulle realizes that Europe thus united under Franco-German auspices is but a fragment of the true Europe, the other half of which forms the Western part of the Soviet empire. To merge these two parts is the task of a united Western Europe and, more particularly, of France. The accomplishment of that task is of course predicated upon an accommodation with the Soviet Union. The main issue of such an accommodation is the stabilization of the territorial and military status quo in Central Europe. The Soviet Union has tried to compel the United States to accept such a stabilization by raising the issue of Berlin. That attempt came to nothing in good measure because of West Germany's and France's veto. But might not France succeed where the United States failed if she could offer the Soviet Union a Europe without the American presence and a Germany immobilized in the French embrace? Such a vista must appeal to de Gaulle; for it portends power and security for France. It might also appeal to Germany, for which it holds out the prospect of unification in peace. And it cannot fail to attract the Soviet Union, threatened as the Russians feel themselves to be by the United States today and in all probability by China tomorrow; for here is the promise of security at the Soviet Union's most sensitive frontier and of the settlement of the single issue which at present most acutely endangers the peace of the world.

We said before that de Gaulle's grand design is rational in itself. The issue it poses concerns the power to carry it through. It is at this point that the analogy between de Gaulle and Bismarck appears to break down. The power of Prussia was supreme in Germany after 1866, and the power of Germany was paramount in Europe after 1870. The power of France, such as it is and is likely to be until France possesses, if she ever does, a nuclear deterrent of her own, can come into play only under the umbrella of the American nuclear deterrent. As long as that umbrella protects him, de Gaulle can play the role of the Bismarck of Europe. Without that protection, he would be the Nasser of Europe, declaiming big lines in an implausible act.

It is de Gaulle's paradoxical good fortune that he can count upon the protec-

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tion of America regardless of what he says and does. However much he may annoy American sensibilities and antagonize American interests, we cannot help but protect him, not for his sake but for ours. What was true in 1953 when John Foster Dulles threatened France with an "agonizing reappraisal" is true today. Regardless of what France does or does not do, we have a vital interest in preventing the addition of French and, through it, European power to that of the Soviet Union. In the awareness of that vital interest of the United States which makes France secure, de Gaulle can afford to attempt the realization of his grand design, the purpose of which is to be done with the need for American protection altogether. Hegel would have enjoyed seeing "the ruse of the idea" thus at work.

* * *

REGARDLESS OF whether de Gaulle succeeds or fails, the relations between the United States and Europe can never again be what they were before January 14, 1963. For de Gaulle has laid bare in simple and stark outline the ills which have ailed the Atlantic Alliance for a decade and which governments on both sides of the Atlantic have been pleased to gloss over with fine phrases and manipulate with petty schemes. We may be able to continue this convenient yet self-defeating tradition for the time being; but the sooner we face the facts, however startling and unpleasant they may be, and act upon them, the better will we be capable of molding them to our interests. So far we have talked and acted as though we were dealing here with the idiosyncrasies of one man and not with the revelation of objective conditions which concern all of us, not only de Gaulle and France.

Thus we have declared that we intend to go ahead with our proposals for a so-called "multilateral" nuclear deterrent to be put at the disposal of NATO as well as of selected allies, regardless of what de Gaulle has said and done. According to this scheme, NATO should have possession of a nuclear deterrent of its own. Yet the all-important question as to who shall determine its use has not yet been authoritatively answered; General Norstad, for instance, has suggested a committee of three. Furthermore, Great Britain and some other members of the alliance shall also possess a nuclear deterrent of their own whose use they could determine independently "in moments of great national peril." It is this scheme which de Gaulle has almost contemptuously rejected. His reasons for doing so, it seems to me, are good, and they are losing nothing of their force by being brushed aside.

The issue which de Gaulle has raised and which our government ought to join is an issue akin to that of sovereignty. It concerns the question of who shall die for what and under what circumstances. As long as the United States has that power of decision through the possession of a nuclear monopoly within the Atlantic Alliance, it has the power to make Frenchmen die for causes which may not be their own (e.g. Cuba), and to refuse to let Americans die for the causes of France (e.g. Suez). If Great Britain or France have that power of decision, albeit only "in moments of great national peril," while they are allies of the United States, it is they who have the power to decide that Americans should die in causes that are not their own.

There are only two possible ways to resolve this issue. Either the United States retains its power of decision, in which case the present Atlantic Alliance must be transformed into a true federation capable of reducing the political interests peculiar to its members to a common denominator. Or the power of decision must be put into the hands of those individual allies who wish to exercise it, in which case the alliance will for all practical purposes be dissolved. The former alternative requires for its achievement a series of constructive and delicate political settlements and ar-

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rangements, eliminating the present points of friction among the allies. The other alternative requires the return of the United States to isolation in a world which will be dominated by four power centers instead of two: the United States, the Soviet Union, Europe, and China. In other words, the alliance will either go forward or backward, but it cannot stand still. Nor is there a middle ground for reconciling the two alternatives.

It is such a middle ground which the administration has been seeking with its different schemes for a "multilateral" deterrent. Yet with the control of nuclear weapons it is as it is with sovereignty: it is indivisible. It cannot be shared. It is either here or there, and it cannot be in two places at the same time. We have learned through the bitter experience of a civil war how futile and dangerous it is to gloss over and obfuscate the issue of ultimate decision for the sake of a fleeting political advantage. We ought to be able to apply that lesson to the issue at hand. There are advantages and risks in either of the alternatives from which we must choose. But there is nothing but tremendous risk in a "compromise" which leaves the ultimate power of decision in the hands of the President of the United States under certain conditions and transfers it to individual nations or a committee under others, or, worse still, leaves it in abeyance.

Whether or not we find these policies to our taste or in our interest, we are indebted to de Gaulle for having posed the great issues of the day with simple and accurate clarity. De Gaulle has made clear what some of us have pointed to for a decade without anybody listening—that the political, military, and economic foundations upon which the Atlantic Alliance was constructed are in the process of erosion or have altogether ceased to exist and that hence the institutional superstructure of the Alliance has lost its empirical supports. De Gaulle is hailed in France as the great realist who, after "demythologizing" Algeria and French parliamentarianism, is now performing the same beneficial operation on the Atlantic Alliance. His grand design may well come to naught. Yet great men are remembered even for their failures, and lesser men can learn from them. For even their failures shed an illuminating light upon a reality obscured by high-sounding yet inaccurate words and distorted by spurious actions. So will de Gaulle be remembered, even if he should fail.

* * *

**Graham Hutton:**

CLIO, THE MUSE OF HISTORY, has a nasty habit of upsetting Grand Designs. She has been very busy of late, on both sides of the Iron Curtain.The planned immensity of the Communist half of the world has disintegrated between Moscow (and its European satellites) and Peking (and its Asian satellites). Both Communist poles—the Moscow one and Peking—are tugging hard, striving to keep their followers in line. Meanwhile on our own side of the Curtain, the solidarity of the Western defense and economic infrastructure has been rudely shattered by General de Gaulle. In consequence, President Kennedy's Grand Design appears to be decidedly shaky at its European end.

Prime Minister Macmillan simultaneously has had to face shock after shock: the U. S. administration's whipping away of Skybolt, on which the R.A.F. nuclear bomb-carrying planes depended; de Gaulle's abrupt declaration that France didn't want Britain in the Common Market, after over two years of so-called negotiations on the British application to join; and a British economy and electorate both turned sour against the Conservatives only a year or so before a General Election. Finally in NATO the French are at loggerheads with everyone else, refusing President Kennedy's offer of Polaris, re-

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fusing to integrate their forces with NATO, refusing to allow their bases to be used for American nuclear warheads, and refusing to integrate the economic system of the Common Market, and the currency and financial systems of the Six, into the wider Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in which the U.S., Canada, and most West European nations *outside* the Common Market Six are also full members. It is this last refusal that threatens the economic substructure of the North Atlantic defense system and, therefore, of the Grand Design.

But besides the many Muses, the Fates are also at work: birth, life, death; pushing this man or this country or this political party up, and the others down; spinning, weaving, and then slitting the thin-spun life of man. Nothing endures long. Even the French say that only the provisional lasts. President Kennedy and his advisers are young indeed, compared with General de Gaulle and Dr. Adenauer and Mr. Macmillan. Planners and builders of Grand Designs have to look to a future world hardly imaginable by us today. We don't stop to imagine France (and French internal politics) minus de Gaulle, and Germany (and its internal and external policies) minus Dr. Adenauer, and the British Tories without Macmillan, and socialists without the late Hugh Gaitskell, to say nothing of the utterly untried and unknown but up-and-coming Liberal party. On all of these uncertainties the Grand Design is erected, and by all of them it is threatened.

The bold, imaginative Grand Design of President Kennedy and his young advisers for the defense and development of the Western world is like a polygonal pylon. It is poised on five feet: the Americas (especially South); non-Communist Asia (especially India); the Africa-to-Middle-East belt of underdeveloped territories; Western Europe; and the oft-forgotten vast areas of the oceans (of which the Atlantic and Arctic are more important than any others). Into all of these strongholds West Europeans penetrate with trade and influence, or even conventional weapons. And across Arctic and Atlantic the West Europeans and Americans are linked, as never before, by the defense networks of NATO, by equally vital monetary and economic networks, and by signed alliances, as well as by deep-reaching sentiments. Willy-nilly, we are "members one of another," though we may not yet behave as such.

* * *

IN 1948 President Truman took the brave decision about the Berlin airlift; and the West Europeans—realizing their peril—immediately fell into line and played their parts. The European Recovery Program set Western Europe on its legs at the American taxpayers' expense; for, without this program, no American defense policy against Russia could have counted on effective bases in Western Europe. Effective bases everywhere demand a sound economic infrastructure: highways, oil pipelines, railroads in good order, factories, and contented workers turning out local supplies, etc. Those were the days before rockets, when only airborne nuclear warheads in planes manned by human pilots formed the first arc of defense for the West. Gradually since 1948—it is now fifteen years but seems only a day—the economic infrastructure of the whole Western world has been made sound and solid. European currencies look the dollar in the face, while American businessmen "stay liquid" waiting to know in which European country to extend their operations—in short, where to invest dollars in new assets firmly fixed in European soil. The American aid to France, Italy, and Germany has transformed them into competitive, up-to-date, industrial systems. (Most of the aid to Britain was in turn channelled on to the Commonwealth countries, like India and Africa, for their development—which is one explanation of the famous "British

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lag" since 1949.) Attempts to form a common West European Defense Union —variously known as WEU or EDU— came to nothing because the Fourth Republic refused to "wear it," the last occasion before de Gaulle acquired power being under Mendès-France. But the British, who had undertaken to keep their forces on the continent and had already signed a fifty-year treaty of alliance with France, were in favor of a common Western defense union, both under Labor and Tory governments.

Out of all this in the mid-50's came the Common Market movement, hard on the heels of the French-German-inspired Coal and Steel Union. Greatly in error, the British Conservative government declined to enter at the beginning, not feeling sure of the Common Market's effects as an ultimate "Third Force" which might be inserted between Britain-in-Europe and the United States, Canada, the rest of the Commonwealth, Latin America, etc. The British stuck to the NATO concept of defense, and were even then suspicious of a "Paris-Bonn axis" in Europe. The British of the day—most of them, in both major parties—mistrusted the political and defense implications of the Rome Treaty, because any political, economic, and military confederation of the leading powers of Western Europe (Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Holland) would mean an effective "Third Force" of another kind inserted between America and Russia, which might make hay of the existing NATO defense system and the "special relationship" between America and Britain.

AT THIS POINT we can begin to see the shape of things now surrounding us as it emerges from the past. Of course there was never any reliable "special relationship" between Washington and London after the war. The British, who had perfected radar and the jet motor, and had done much to perfect atomic fission, handed these discoveries over to the Americans freely to develop, as part of the war effort. Americans so developed them, at vast expense, that after the war the defense of the West came to repose almost wholly on American shoulders—at least for some years until Europe's economic recovery, also at American expense, had been achieved by 1953. By that time, with the abortive coup at Suez looming up, it should have been obvious to the British that Washington took no account whatever of any "special relationship" with Britain. Proofs were abundant: the State Department's support for Moussadegh and the Iraqui expropriation (confiscation, to speak truly) of the British refinery at Abadan; the same support for Egypt's complaints against the British; the same support for the fast-waning British "colonies" in Africa or Malaya (India had gone in 1947, unhappily dissolving into parts, of which the Moslem and Hindu are the biggest); and the strong backing from the outset of all attempts at any West European Union. After Suez, there was hardly a capital in the world with American and British embassies in which American and British policies were not opposed—and not merely in the underdeveloped countries. If any "special relationship" has existed between the United States and the United Kingdom since Suez, it can only have been in some British minds.

Since President Kennedy took office, his policies and those of his advisers have been plainly, without concealment, almost crudely and flatly opposed to those of London. For example, in matters of trade and currency (even the President himself went out of his way to rebuff the little tentative suggestion made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Maudling, about extending the lending powers of the International Monetary Fund last September); over Africa (not just South Africa, which, after all, was elbowed out of the Commonwealth); over British doubts about the French-German axis inside the Common Market; over defense and NATO (the

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Skybolt-Nassau debacle for Mr. Macmillan was in no way cushioned); over the bold American action against Russian bases in Cuba (London was treated exactly like other European capitals); over relatively little things like subsidized shipping, airlines, trade with Communist countries, dealings in gold, and non-British and non-American affairs such as the Congo, etc.

General de Gaulle, alone among West Europeans of statesmanlike stature, has always believed, and still devoutly believes, in the illusion, so dear for over a decade to the top brass of both the Tory and Labor parties, of a "special relationship" between Washington and London. He, too, has been fooled into crediting the idea of some non-existent anti-French, anti-continental-European plans, plots, and policies of *les Anglo-Saxons*. For him, it is no longer *Albion* which is *perfide;* it is Uncle Sam as well. How otherwise is it possible to explain that extraordinary boat-burning press conference on January 14, in which he announced his rejection of Kennedy's Polaris offer without having ever replied to the offer officially? After the death of the Fourth Republic, General de Gaulle's second great revival of his beloved country in his lifetime seems to have resulted in a personal autocracy. Why should it not lead him to believe in his own destiny and that of France, as the saviors of continental Western Europe from the Anglo-Saxons? Led by non-Europeans (Americans), the Anglo-Saxons seem to him to have a Grand Design to merge France and all Western Europe in a NATO system of defenses and an OECD system of economics, in which all the weapons, decisions, and policies—for peacetime development and for war—would be furnished by the Americans. And Britain must seem the thin end of the perfidious Anglo-Saxons' wedge, which they are trying to drive into the solid structure of the Common Market and into France's own independent nuclear deterrent (not due for years yet).

In that Common Market, as in NATO, France has already proved able to confound the other five and to secure for herself and her associated African ex-colonies a preferential economic position. She has also been able—since the Germans are still prohibited, by their own agreement, from making nuclear weapons—to secure for herself a dominating position in the political-strategic setup inside the Six (which is therefore a "club within the club" inside NATO). No wonder de Gaulle felt strong enough by this past January—after two years of pseudo-negotiations between the Six and the British in Brussels—to proclaim that "his" France was set against allowing Britain into the Common Market, or into any West European political or confederated setup. All this behavior stems from the "special relationship" illusion about American-British policies which he shares with Mr. Macmillan and a lot of other British leaders in both the major political parties.

NOT ONE of them—not de Gaulle or his followers, nor Macmillan and his, nor the British Labor leaders, nor the press in Paris and London—not one of them has looked away from the weak little British or French so-called "independent deterrent." How deterrent can either of them be, five years from now? The British deterrent was always dependent on Washington's good graces; and now (since the Kennedy administration's rude awakening of the British over Skybolt, and its almost comic offer of precisely the same kind of deterrent to the British at Nassau, an offer to which poor Mr. Macmillan so gratefully clung) is even more dependent on Washington than ever. It can neither be independent nor a deterrent.

On goes de Gaulle, superbly confident that "his" France will be able to develop an independent deterrent of her own, some years from now. On go Mr. Macmillan, Mr. Thorneycroft, and others in the top brass of the Tory party, at least publicly oblivious of the fact that Britain's

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"independent deterrent" in the future Polaris setup must be just as dependent on American back-tracking—or even an outright American refusal of supplies of key-components—as Skybolt has proved (after so many years of self-delusion). Of them all, it seems, the only realists are the Americans. They know that defense and economic development must have a world-wide design: that national sovereignty is already out-of-date.

* * *

WHERE DOES this leave us: Americans, Canadians, British, French, Germans, and the rest of Western Europe?

Begin with defense. The Americans stand at present possessed of enough nuclear weapons and means of delivering them to stave off, or cope with, any conceivable aggression anywhere. Britain and France cannot possess anything remotely comparable, ever; they simply lack the economic resources. The Germans have freely abandoned the right to make such weapons; and even they lack enough resources. The West European nations turn out one half of the material output of Americans *per head;* they have nothing like the amount of American productive equipment behind each pair of elbows; so if they want to keep up, and raise, their people's standards of consumption, they must increase capital-formation *for productive purposes* for another generation at least. To put it briefly, Americans can afford 10 per cent or 12½ per cent of their total output for defenses, and still maintain standards of consumption double those anywhere else; yet 5 to 7½ per cent of British, German, or French national income for defense becomes a terrible burden. The only possibility of a real nuclear deterrent made by Europeans, therefore, is for all Western Europe to get together and pool its resources*—which de Gaulle flatly opposes, because France must have her own. These facts thrust us back on North America, NATO, the OECD, and the leadership coming out of Washington; at any rate, for defense of the West as a whole, and as long as "the crunch" might involve nuclear war anywhere.

In this setting it becomes apparent that there never has been any need of a "special relationship" between the Americans and the British since Suez, if not since the Berlin airlift. Nor is there any need now. Nor can there possibly be in the IBM-dominated future. There are only the four blocs of Powers big enough to envisage "the crunch" of a possible nuclear war: Russia and her European satellites (the latter all disaffected and mighty unwilling); China; Western Europe (which is not yet a unit and may never be one for such a purpose); and the U.S. Barring unforeseeable acts of fate, all the present indications are that the leaders of Russia will not aggress Westward—at any rate, not if American deterrent power remains what it is, and not while 700,000,000 Chinese (potential nuclear weapon-wielders) sit encamped on Russia's Asian back-porch in a dooryard incapable of land defenses by the Russians. So far as other Communist countries are concerned, if Mr. Khrushchev was instantly ready to perform such a back-shuffle over Cuba when Mr. Kennedy dared him to start a nuclear war, what back-shuffles wouldn't he (or his successors) be ready to force any other Communist states to perform, barring only China (too weak and unprepared for nuclear war as yet) and Albania (insignificant)? As for Europe and America, they will never make war on each other.

That left the Grand Design of Mr. Kennedy's advisers standing safely on the Atlantic Ocean and Western Europe until de Gaulle refused Britain entry to the Common Market, and also refused Polaris, etc. Americans used to look mainly to the other three feet of the five:

* All Western Europe in the OECD could muster 260,000,000 people (without neutral Switzerland and Sweden) and could even now turn out at least three-quarters of the annual output of the U.S.

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the Far East, the Latin American area, and the wide, nondescript, underdeveloped belt from Africa across the Middle East to Russia—the "soft underbelly" of Russia in fact.

The Far East is for the moment paralyzed by China's internal difficulties, the Chinese-Indian border dispute, and the Russo-Chinese doctrinal dispute over Communism. So we come to the African-Middle-Eastern zone: the zone of former State Department miscalculations about Moussadegh and Iraq; about Nasser and Egypt; about Lebanon and Saudi Arabia and Yemen; about the Congo; about French Algeria; and so on. In that wide belt of states, British and French and Belgian ex-administrators could help the Americans—and the International Bank, International Development Association, UNO, and the indigenous Africans themselves—quite a lot. It is a pity that a naive American "anti-colonialism" (conceived as if George III still ruled in Britain, and as if all Africans, Arabs, or others were automatically qualified to run modern states, industries, governments, courts, and the press) should have apparently dominated the State and other Departments in Washington for so long. There are great and grave problems for new and untried "native" governments throughout Africa. Ghana, Togoland, the Congo are not exactly models of democracy, free enterprise, and the personal freedoms. Western, "white," industrial, democratic sponsoring nations should collaborate in common policies in all African emergent nations, to prevent what has already happened in so many—and may yet happen in many more.

A more realistic and more effective approach would be to strengthen the hitherto weak American initiatives to get the French, German, and Italian surpluses on their balances of payments mobilized within the OECD, and organized in common with funds from all other OECD members. This done, we could all go forward together to make lending to the less-developed countries a more professionally supervised and technical, joint, international undertaking. Latin America's needs could be brought under the same umbrella, thus alleviating the burden on Washington and the U.S. balance of payments created by the Alliance for Progress.

AMERICAN policy has been ardently pro-German and pro-French these past few years *merely in order to make the Common Market a going concern and to get the British and others into it.* De Gaulle's sweeping rejection of both American and British policies—his definitive *"Non!"* to European federation, a viable NATO, and a truly cooperative North Atlantic economic system in OECD—has now swept a good deal of the original Grand Design away, as far as the European and North Atlantic setup is concerned. (This is not to say the British were right all along, though they were sometimes. Nor is it to say that there can be, in future, any "special relationship"—other than emotional—between Americans and British.) From now on, nothing we have been used to for the last decade can be the same. The Six of the Market are *not* going to form a federation as long as de Gaulle lives. In defense as in currency, France will not abridge her national sovereignty. Which means that as long as Dr. Adenauer lives, Germany will strive to stick on the Paris-Bonn axis, but not thereafter. She will be torn between Paris and Berlin. Which means, in turn, that American defense plans in Europe will now have to be based on British, and all the others' cooperation—but not on the French. Which finally implies revision of American economic, monetary, commercial, and other plans—all components of the Grand Design. Unless France gives way on many things so fervently proclaimed by de Gaulle—which is unthinkable—there simply will be no more perfect European Union; no perfect NATO conventional forces; no full monetary and commercial

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cooperation within OECD; no low customs tariff round the Six (low enough to let American—and now British, Japanese, Commonwealth, Latin American, and others'—farm products and manufactures into the Market); no generous and full mobilizing of the vast French, German, and Italian gold and dollar (and sterling) reserves for international stimulation of trade and the easing of the daily lot of the less-developed countries. At least, not with the French—the leaders and dominators of the Six—taking part in any of it.

The Grand Designers in Washington therefore have to do some re-designing about Europe. They will find plenty of European friends to help even if France won't. The British will help at once, if for no other reason than that their own situation is now politically embarrassing, burdensome in terms of defense, and vulnerable economically. Let us look at Britain last.

BRITAIN is now in the most critical domestic political crisis since the revolt in the Tory party and the Commons which overthrew Chamberlain after "the phoney war" at the beginning of 1940. All elements are in the mixture: foreign policy, defense policy, economic policy. To make it worse, both of the major parties are split over the Common Market and defense; and there is now a third party (insignificant in the Commons, with 7 seats out of over 600, because of the peculiar British voting system, but polling well over one-fifth, and sometimes as much as two-fifths, of votes in all the by-elections of the last two years). This third party, the old-line Liberal Party of Asquith and Lloyd George, strongly recruited from the younger generation and the newly college-educated, is officially in favor of Britain's entry into the Common Market, and against any independent British nuclear deterrent. So the Liberals are not split; whereas the Tories under Macmillan have to look over their shoulders to see if they are likely to lose any agricultural or other votes at the forthcoming General Election—it must be held at latest by the fall of next year—while the socialists must look over theirs to see if they will lose any over their sitting-on-the-fence attitudes about defense and the Common Market. Both of these major old-line parties could easily lose votes to the Liberals. Thus everything depends for the future of Britain on how things develop in the defense, foreign affairs, and economic fields (and they are all intercommunicating) during the next eighteen to twenty-one months.

I have already indicated my view: that the very idea of a so-called "independent" British nuclear deterrent is a chimera. It is nonsense. The recent American administration's offer of Polaris missiles for yet-to-be British-built submarines is also nonsense, because any administration could cut their supply off or otherwise go back on their production (as with Skybolt), leaving the costly British submarines virtually useless. Anyway, Polaris is going to be outdated very soon and outmaneuverable by Russian counter-action. There is no contracting-out of a nation's destiny, except by suicide; and the truth is that Britain, France, and Germany have too few resources to mount any credible and effective deterrent in five years' time against powers as resourceful as Russia or the U.S.—and maybe China will have joined in the nuclear race by then.

Consequently, whether we like it or not, we British must adapt to inevitable circumstances. If a nuclear war breaks out, it will probably drag us in or annihilate us—as it will our continental neighbors, including France. Such a war is unthinkable on a small scale; and if it happens on a big scale, the U.S., Russia, and perhaps China will be involved first. Flatly in the face of these unpleasant facts, the Tory government of Mr. Macmillan, helped for the moment by the Washington administration, seems bent on a face-saving operation—looking not unlike the intractable de Gaulle's out-of-date sovereignty

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—with a few American Polaris missiles, to be delivered whenever Britain can build their submarine carriers at vast expense. This is to be imposed on an economy already creaking and groaning beneath the highest taxes in the Western world on persons in the more productive and responsible brackets, on goods for consumption (gas, tobacco, drinks), and on all businesses (mainly for the British social services and Welfare State, which is of course all for consumption—except education, where the British lag woefully). It is to be imposed on a defense program already costing Britain vast sums in German marks and other currencies, while her own sterling (or gold reserve) is siphoned off by the French, Germans, and Italians, whose defense contributions to the NATO force are not even yet comparable to the British, and in whose national budgets defense does not loom proportionately as large.

THAT BRINGS us to the economic field. Despite the somewhat discourteous treatment of the British Chancellor of the Exchequer in Washington last September, and of the British Treasury's mild proposals for the easing of international liquidity through the International Monetary Fund, sterling remains a world reserve currency* on which at least two-fifths of all trade crossing the frontiers of the free half of the world is conducted. It is therefore important not just to Britain, but also to Indians, Latin Americans, Europeans, and Africans, as well as Americans, Canadians, and the British themselves. One could kick sterling out from under as a reserve currency very easily *if the U.S. authorities were immediately ready to finance that volume of international trade financed by sterling, in addition to the more than two-fifths already financed by U.S. dollars.* But this hardly seems the moment—at least not to a non-American economist—to aggravate the British balance of payments, to chisel away British invisible earnings (shipping, airlines, insurance), to "tie" loans to the spending of their currency-terms (dollars, marks, francs) in the lending country, etc. etc. It is hardly the moment for the U.S. either, because internally the U.S. administration is bound to reflation as a policy this year (and next), with budget deficits; and the U.S. balance of payments is not yet quite secure enough to withstand sudden new stresses, which would certainly occur, if the British—with gold and dollar reserves less than those of either France, or Germany, or Italy, let alone all of them together—found themselves unable to keep on financing their long postwar defense effort, their overseas lending, and other foreign programs demanding foreign currencies. If the British and sterling draw in their horns, the U.S. and the dollar would have to take their place, hurriedly, to prevent a worse collapse of world trade, lending, and development.

From all points of view, the North Atlantic community could only gain, therefore, from a healing of the breach between Washington and London in the field of currency controls, international trade, international lending, and the future of the less-developed nations. We in the industrial Western nations need more, not less, international supervision of loans to the less favored, less technically competent countries. We need more cooperation between ourselves, and less nationalism for national economic gain. We certainly have unemployed men and industrial capacity in America and Britain—we are about the only Western industrial countries who *have*. But that is absolutely no reason for turning inward on ourselves; raising tariffs and other protective and make-work devices for our own citizens, instead of joining forces and seeing how quickly *together* we can deal with the low prices of the underdeveloped countries' primary products, or our own protected

* U. S. dollars and sterling, and to a far smaller extent Swiss francs, are called "reserve currencies" because all other countries' central banks will hold part of their reserves in them (the other main part generally being gold).

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farmers' produce, or our older downhill-going industries, by way of joint stimuli to capital development overseas, or joint loans, etc. It sounds odd when Americans criticize de Gaulle—or the high level of the Common Market tariff against other countries' agricultural produce—while American policies (and everyday practices in business or customs matters) discriminate against others' goods, or financing, or services. And the British are also to blame in this.

The fact remains that actions along purely national lines ill accord with the international—and more vital—policies of any Grand Design. So Americans and British and Canadians (and the smaller powers in Europe not in the Six, for example in the European Free Trade Association) should not wait to work out cooperative solutions to the many economic problems vexing us all. That does not call for any "special relationship" with anyone. But for purely technical reasons (the fact that the dollar and sterling are the two "reserve currencies" for other powers, on which over four-fifths of the free world's international trade is financed) it does mean that Washington and London technical authorities ought to get the green light from their governments to concert their thinking and policies, and not to pull against each other. But there must be no "Anglo-Saxon" special relationship. The obvious new line of advance for the Grand Designers of Washington is to cash-in on the deep alarm which de Gaulle's autocracy has aroused among Germans, Scandinavians, Swiss, Dutch, Belgians, Italians, even the Spaniards—all of whom now wonder where Western Europe's defense would lie if the Yanks suddenly went home. With Paris? With a non-nuclear Paris-Bonn axis? With an odd deal concluded between de Gaulle and Khrushchev, at the cost of Berlin, East Germany, and Dr. Adenauer?

There is a firm European foundation here for one foot of the Grand Design. But it has to be redesigned, re-set; and the best foundation for it would be economic, financial, commercial, agricultural. If Washington were to take the lead in the OECD, *now,* the response would be enormous. For not only the Common Market Six but also the whole of Western Europe, the Americas, Japan, Africa, India want to see recovery, expansion, freer trade, lower burdens. That is the angle from which Washington should now give the lead. There would be a host of followers.

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*MARK HARRIS*

# MY FATHER'S SON

NINE TIMES a week, at specified hours, I button my collar, gather books and papers, lay down my cigar to smoke out, and walk with a certain sense of excitement not unmingled with a sense of inadequacy (paradoxically mingled with a sense of all too *much* adequacy) toward one or another of the brightly fluorescent classrooms boxed row upon row in a box designated Humanities Languages And Literature in a compound of boxes called San Francisco State College, one mile the dry side of the Pacific Ocean.

This campus is a long way, even jetting, from the Lower East Side of Manhattan, where my father was born, and farther yet from a village somewhere in Poland, whose name I never knew, where *his* father was born. Both men are dead, and I the next in line. I compare my father's timetable with my own, checking my heart in my doctor's ears lest it early fail, as my father's failed.

My students are waiting, perhaps hopeful that I might never arrive. It amuses me to be the leader of a classroom (who as a boy was so disobedient he was denied his diploma), as it would amuse and please my father. Many of my students, like my father, are the sons of immigrants—Oriental, Mexican, European, African—scrambling for a skill to live by, with not much time for the leisurely arts, even as my father, educated at the law in briefs and torts, had little time, or anyhow little will or inclination to study along lines of seeming indirection, though it might have given him, at the end, a method of perception by which to find salvation.

This Pacific Ocean my father never saw; never saw the Mississippi; nay, never saw anything west of Camden, N.J., where I drove him late one summer night, 1953. My sister and I were returning to college in Minnesota (my little sister, eleven years younger than I and in the first bloom then of radical skepticism), and my father rode along as far as Camden, inquiring as we drove, "Are there many Jews in Minneapolis?" It was the question he asked of every place I had ever lived—"Are there many Jews in St. Louis? Tell me, are there many *Jews* in Denver?"—fearful of an American interior he would have mistrusted even had he seen it, and persuaded that the Jews survived in America only by the frailest toleration. Tradition was a thread the mighty could snip. The American promise was bunk, like advertisements.

"What comes to mind most often," my mother writes, "is Dad and Ruthie walking toward the Big House down Langdon Avenue. He had a spring to his walk—he was just two months past 18—and we were eagerly waiting to meet and greet him. He had graduated from high school just two days before."

"Ruthie" was my father's sister, last survivor of the five children of Jacob and Annie Finkelstein, who buried her brother and guarded the grave with a stone, though the sons were indifferent to the fate of the bones. "The Big House" was my mother's family home in Mount Vernon, New York, where many children ran for two generations amidst the intrigues of their elders, and run still, though the vast house, with all its secret

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tunnels and corners, is split into units now, and the present children black. The day was February 1, 1914, their first encounter. My mother was instantly enveloped by a love never thereafter diminished ("I wrote Dad at least two or three times each year—after he left us for good—I worried that he might be ill—and perhaps be in a hospital uncared for and unloved. . ."), and he with a spring to his walk.

So it began. And I am walking just the other day, on the campus of my college, west, toward a building of glass, the cafeteria. I see approaching, as I approach, a man whose gait is familiar, his papers pressed by an elbow to his ribs, and it is my father risen from his grave and coming toward me—the very whites of his eyes I see—as upon a certain memorable summer evening in Mount Vernon, N.Y., in a moment of terrible crisis. . . .

It was in August of 1941. ("Warm," says my Journal, "slight head cold. Rumors of Churchill-Roosevelt secret conference.") My father had given me, the night before, sixty dollars in fives and tens to carry to the Dry Dock Savings Bank, wrapping the deposit slip around the money and rolling it tight and tubular, all held together with a rubber band. His fingers were nimble and able, took knots out of shoes, flashed upon typewriter keys.

He had advised me—not ordered, not commanded—to take an early train into the city and deposit the money before going to work. No, said I, I would go to the bank on my lunch hour, take the later train, sleep longer that way. Sleep mattered. I could never get enough. I was eighteen years old, my future was blackly indefinite, sleep was a merciful out. I could sleep fourteen hours and awaken exhausted.

I was employed at the time by the Famous Music Corporation, a division of Paramount Pictures, in the Brill Building on Broadway—a messenger, sweeper, outfielder on the Paramount baseball team. Here songs were manufactured and sheet-music sold (our socko hits when I was there were "The Nearness of You" and "Moon Love," the latter adapted from Tchaikovsky). I had begun at the bottom, already scornful of the top, at fifteen dollars a week, less fifteen cents withheld for Social Security, many hours of my day spent sleeping upon piles of "Moon Love" in the stockroom. My Uncle Allen had got me the job, and I was kept because I was his nephew.

So I slept, took the later train, carried messages that day, swept the floor, slept on piles of sheet-music, and set off at lunch time for the Dry Dock Savings Bank (Lexington at 59th), only to discover, as I stood in line at the cage, that my father's sixty dollars was gone from my pocket.

I knew no sensation of panic or fear. All that had ever been lost had been found—sweaters and eye-glasses and bags of lunch; you had only to retrace your steps. But a fellow-employee named Sidney Mann knew better. "I'll tell you what, there, it's lost," he said. It was not to be found behind the sheet music, nor had it been recovered by the New York Central Railroad or by the Interborough Rapid Transit. I telephoned my mother, who sent my sister, seven years old, on hands and knees through the gathering leaves, behind hedges, beneath shrubs, and in the gutters from home to the railroad station.

From my mother's point of view the crisis was my father's anger. Not that he struck nor swore, only that the house was habitable in proportion to his sweetness, gay if he was gay, grim if he was grim; grimmer and grimmer as the years passed. I had feared nothing, it was only sixty dollars, but as the day progressed my mother's despair was conveyed to me, and the magnitude of the loss increased with the passage of hours.

At last he came. No, first the train came, and you watched to see if your father was on it. In the suburbs you lived at the whim of the railroad. My father lived for twenty years in the suburbs without ever adjusting to this insult, forever threatening, when he felt oppressed, to lead us back into the city, though he confessed, when his mood was high, that suburban air was better than city air, kept your nose cleaner; but despising all the rest, knowing there was something dreadfully wrong with lives so divided, families detached from the work of the father, fathers detached from the life of the family. He must have felt guilty with this knowledge, as one does who holds a truth he never hears expressed, and so imagines himself isolated, undoubtedly peculiar, and possibly even mad. Eventually, having brought his

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family far enough along to satisfy himself that he had launched it, he fled back into the city (alone, or so we thought), concealed from us, sending us envelopes barren of return address, so that beyond his mystery and our insult was the simple indignity of having to pay overdue postage. In the end he died on the floor of a post office, having mailed his last envelope—to my sister in Minnesota.

But now he was alive, and with us, coming toward us on a summer evening, his New York *Sun* pressed by an elbow to his ribs. Someone ran to him. Not I. My brother or my sister. And he was told about the sixty dollars, not that I heard it but only saw clearly by some break in his gait that he had been told; *that* at least was done, the awful news broken, only the consequences to endure. I waited, standing before our door, perhaps even with my hands in my pockets, possibly whistling, but uncertain whether to be defiant, whether to stand erect with manly dignity or to assume a child's stance and so remind him, after all, I was scarcely grown, scarcely responsible, so much money should never have been entrusted to me. Undoubtedly he, too, pondered stances as he walked, and achieved an attitude. I could see the whites of his eyes now as I saw them twenty years afterward in the building of glass three thousand miles west of Mount Vernon, N.Y., the familiar gait, the paper between elbow and ribs, and I braced for whatever fury, but he said only, simply confirming something he had heard, "I understand you lost the money," and passed beyond me into the house, as I now pass beyond the glass into the cafeteria.

The villain who found it has spent it, my father is dead, my skeptical sister is married to an Iranian mathematician in Minnesota, the New York *Sun* has failed, and I am the father of two sons and a daughter, as my father was, my second son named Henry, as my father's second son is Henry. In short, the matter, as we say, has blown over.

In the building of glass I am reading aloud a dull but sensible paper I have written entitled "What About the Rigged Book Show?" It is Wednesday, December 9, 1959, my wife's birthday. She is present. Just as I am at the climax of my reading, the door of the room is quietly opened, and a young blonde lady whom I recognize as an assistant in our Division office attracts my wife's attention with a whisper and delivers a slip of paper into her hand. My wife's face shows no expression, and as I complete my reading I guess wildly at the contents, running first through major tragedies—my children have been killed, my house has burned down (we have been warned of defective wiring); and then through lesser mishaps—my dog has been killed, my automobile has been stolen; and finally through simple alterations of plans—our friends have canceled our evening. Very well, we will go to another restaurant, thank God it wasn't the children.

It was my father who was dead. That was the message my wife received, and my first thought was wordplay, *my father's deathday is my wife's birthday.* On the whole, the event struck me as less than tragic, though loftier than a mishap. I had been much more affected, six months earlier, by the effort of declaring to him, by long-distance telephone, that I would accept positively no more postage-due envelopes; all would go to the dead-letter office. In reply he sent a brief note, stamped to assure delivery, concluding, "You are a dutiful son." I had broken off a conversation I intended (of course) to resume.

We went to dinner with our friends at Lambro's, then home, sat by the fire and drank a drink, and a gentleman telephoned from the New York City Police Department to ask me to identify the body. I said I couldn't go that far for so little, referring him to my Aunt Ruth, she who had ushered my father into the view of my mother, down Langdon Avenue to The Big House forty-five years before.

That summer—1959, my father's last summer, when we broke off—my emptiness had begun to worry me. I was composed and mellow, and the living was easy. All that had been on my mind I had discharged in a novel, *Wake Up, Stupid,* published in July, and so successful in its way that it was soon to carry me beyond accustomed comforts.

All my most useful grievances were submerged beneath this new experience, transforming my petulance to amiability. Society, that enemy always goading me to labor, now threatened, by taking me in, to deprive me of my inspiration. There was a six-day expense-free trip to New York in early fall, on a matter of business requiring one hour of

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conversation; it was to be the first of five long trips during the year ahead, all somehow necessary in ways never intended by the people who paid for them.

Three days before leaving San Francisco that first time I had instructed myself in my Journal, "Call [your] father but do not meet with him." Within hours of my arrival in New York I telephoned him. It was an answering service. He was out. When would he be back? There was no telling. Would I leave my number? No. Why not? Because then he'd know where I was. Why should he know where I was when I never knew where *he* was?

Fearing to meet him, nevertheless I invited coincidence, walking on my first night north on Lexington Avenue, turning at 57th Street to linger before the house in which he and I had shared an apartment one difficult year. He owned the house, though his title had been in dispute for years—"clouded, in several ways," another lawyer described it afterward. My father had often been on the verge of selling it, but then declined, needing the house because he needed the dispute. In any case, I did not encounter him here this night, nor during the rest of that trip, which turned out to be an orgy of leisure. My general impression of well-being was heightened one morning by a telephone call which was to have a significant effect upon my life—Rust Hills, an *Esquire* editor, asking if I would appear at a symposium in December, in Iowa. I agreed; $500 richer, I hadn't even got out of bed. My hotel, the Algonquin, was a long way from Famous Music, around the corner and up the street. The *Daily Mirror* headline, commenting upon a Dodgers loss (the World Series being then in session) to the White Sox, was a shoe that didn't fit: STILL BUMS.

THAT Saturday night I slept at my brother's apartment in Mount Vernon, in a house I had not slept in for thirty years. The humming of TV boxes drifted through opened windows into the courtyard. Thirty years before it had been radio: The Goldbergs, Major Bowes, Eddie Cantor, Amos 'n Andy, Singin' Sam the Barbasol Man.

Above all, this apartment house is associated in my memory with my first and most durable playmate, he whose life goes farther back with mine than any other, Thomas Joseph Gaffney, now of Binghamton, N.Y. He was to be much upon my mind during the coming year, the more so as the face of John F. Kennedy was more before me. In my imagination the two men look more alike than perhaps they actually do, bearing many resemblances reassuring to me, even the coincidence of a May 29th birthday.

Tom Gaffney and I were schoolmates from the beginning, and close afterward until the war carried us apart. He was my principal teacher, and I no doubt his, for we spoke bluntly and confidentially, sharing our most compelling or forbidden secrets as easily as we'd share a slice of cake. Our small stature was our first identity, for he or I was always least, and therefore last in line, and the other second. We bore our humiliation, vowing not revenge but justice. If Society thought us small, and assigned us the lowest place, we knew what Society was: it was blind and stupid. This much we told ourselves, and spun out of our first disadvantage a theory of the world whose basis was outrage and whose goal was remedy. What a great profit is loss. Our sense of justice was early born at the end of the line among the little in a school of White Protestant teachers; and the walls were hung with White Protestant Presidents.

But we also learned, as we grew, to refine and differentiate. Fakes may also be rabbis and priests: each of us at a separate church saw by their eyes they were counting the house. So he told me, and I him, and carried each other across lines that way, and learned to cross other lines together, comfortably and securely quite at home in a world not specifically designed for Jews and Irish Catholics, but somehow made for us all the same. Together, Tom Gaffney and I discovered poetry, politics, race relations, automobiles, tobacco, girls and women. We taught each other grammar, that we might distinguish ourselves from the vulgar masses, though we moved well enough among the masses, too, and so knew the best of everything.

The next day my brother drove me to Idlewild. In the car, we heard the early innings of the Series game, but I would be in California before I knew the outcome. I told myself I had not reached my father: maybe on the next trip.

Back home, I amused myself with proj-

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ects—applying for Ford, Fulbright, and Guggenheim grants, negotiating for jobs at schools where conditions appeared better than at my own, delivering a few lectures in Northern California, quitting cigarettes.

And I was cheerfully consenting to almost everything those days. It is a dangerous game. In a notice written that month for *The Saturday Review* (in itself an act of consent, since I would not have written a notice for a book I didn't like) I described my very danger: "In America, with its shelves of abundance, all kinds of suicide are available. The writer may pick and choose. The harder task is to remain at his craft."

I prepared for Iowa, as I had agreed with Rust Hills from my bed at the Algonquin. My task would be to deliver one public talk solo at the State University, to participate on panel discussions, and to meet with students and faculty. Our unifying topic was The Writer In A Mass Culture—something like that.

I prepared a nine-page manuscript entitled "What About the Rigged Book Show?" The book business has long impressed me, like society itself, as an arrangement whereby mutual praise was carried too far: writer, publisher, editor, reviewer, agent, publicist, and bookseller joined hands and sang, "What's good sells and what sells is good, and that's that," to the tune of "Moon Love." It did not view a book—which a book must be—as a writer's covenant with himself, not something made but something felt, not first for the whole surrounding culture but first for the one fine leading reader who can read it. My message was as felicitously phrased and as reliably documented as my talent could manage, and I suppose rather dull.

I flew out of San Francisco on Thursday morning, December 3, 1959—my father's last Thursday; rode through Chicago by bus from airport to airport; and flew in the dark to Iowa City, where I was promptly plunged into the midst of a big, noisy party of students and teachers and *Esquire* staff, one of those congregations of strangers where you meet many people who know people you know. At such occasions I always feel fraudulent, as if I have misrepresented myself: people greet me with obvious disappointment, under the impression, I know, that I am seven feet tall and heroically athletic, as I wish I were. Nor does my conversation sparkle: my best ad libs are prepared at leisure. There was no noticeable clamor of protest when I left the party.

Four speakers had been engaged—Dwight Macdonald, Ralph Ellison, Norman Mailer, and I. Macdonald and Mailer had not yet arrived, but I found Ellison lodged in the motel room adjoining mine, we opened the door between, and he began to tell me about Faulkner, whom he defended against charges of anti-Negroism. Ellison's affection for Faulkner, hard-won against Ellison's natural tendency, as a Negro, to err in the direction of doubt, affected me strongly: just such an affection had I formed for Henry Adams, hard-won against my natural tendency, as a Jew, to suspect the worst of charges of Adams's anti-Semitism.

Just before lunch the next day Mailer arrived, baggy and shaggy, up all night in Chicago, and needing a shave. Luncheon was lavish on white cloth, and the service was impeccable, not a crime in itself but tending to introduce a note of propriety and formality—the suffocating tone of a gentlemen's club of exactly the sort whose rules excluded Jews. Of course this wasn't the case, only my reflex. Introductions were made in a circle, and people shook my hand and said they were pleased to meet me, while looking over my shoulder, past me, beyond me, I suppose in the hope somebody interesting would arrive.

Mailer, though, looked *at* me, and I felt over-dressed and over-shorn and over-bathed, costumed for the masquerade, hidden, hiding, something in me going the wrong way as it had been for some months, a little genteel now, my accent not quite my own—as his was not his own when, after lunch, we were taped and filmed for the evening news, and he broke into a deep Southern drawl, as if he'd been born in Georgia and hadn't left. The drawl made no objective sense, but the resentful gesture counted, for it focused us upon the question we had presumably come to discuss—writers and the mass audience; public relations.

The dullness of my address that night I blame upon my having discharged my feelings in the writing, so it was only a reading now, and I no actor. Macdonald, speaking

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from notes he was still in the process of arranging, gave the honest appearance of a witty, sensitive soul genuinely on the run from mass culture ("mid-cult," he called it). Some questions were asked from the floor, and we filed out to a party—in a small house, at which there were many people.

Mailer asked me whether the boy in one of my books was really I—whether my I.Q. ran off the charts like that. I said no, and he drifted away as well as one could drift in the crush. No, put it this way, it was I who drifted, because Mailer stood mostly on a single spot, drink in hand, surrounded by students and delivering a monologue from which I could not then, nor in the motel afterward, capture a single rounded meaning or idea. I wandered in and out of his circle, tuning in and tuning out as one tunes a radio on a long night's drive, hoping for something. I accused him of incoherence. He accused me of dullness, of having said nothing in my talk he couldn't report to his mother, said I had "charming talents." Yet I received, through fumes and incoherence, the sufficient beginnings of a message: in my hotel room, sometime after five o'clock Saturday morning, I wrote in my Journal a line of resolution—"determined to be more myself tomorrow."

He had caught me hiding, safely reading, not giving, purified of risk, canned, faking a high I.Q. when I was not intellect but religion, feigning coherence, dressed as a professor at the respectable masquerade. *Something I was withholding.* He didn't say what, nor thought it wise to reduce it to plain and simple language, perhaps because a writer keeps his coherence home, fearing to squander it in the air.

Saturday morning, without sleep, loaded with wake-up pills, I went to breakfast with a friend who'd come over from Purdue for the festivities. That afternoon, when our symposium gathered again, I seized the microphone as soon as it was mine to seize, and wildly flailed, searching for something I more nearly believed than what I had said the night before. I now had less coherence, but more heat, which excited me, and moved me toward a sense of liberation I hadn't known. It was more than sleeplessness and more than the intoxication of wake-up pills, though *exactly* what it was I do not know, nor did it last undiluted more than a few days, or far beyond the Iowa line, but joined by bloodstream to something I hadn't had before, a kind of release, freedom, a sense of the joy that might come with identity. Meanwhile it merely perplexed the Iowa students, who expressed their amazement that I should un-say on Saturday afternoon all that I had said on Friday night. They chided me for my inconsistency, as students will who pant for certainty.

There was another all-night party Saturday. I was now two nights without sleep, Mailer three. Sunday morning, waiting in the cold for the train to Chicago, he offered to teach me to box, but I wisely kept my hands in my pockets, refusing to be hit in the name of education. Why box? I don't know. Something must be made of it, but I don't know what—he wanted to establish, I suppose, that there was something he knew that I didn't, and boxing was the visible way; wanted to tell me he'd been somewhere I hadn't, crashed upon the rocks in the place he'd been, undone, unstrung, wrecked, battered, lost himself, hidden himself from himself, because that's what they take from you in return for your consent, promising you everything you thought you wanted. They had buried him beneath rewards, he'd been a decade trying to dig his way out, it might be another before he was up and free, and meanwhile he was appalled at my ridiculous eagerness to tumble into the trap: he was prepared to punch me to teach me. Then the train came.

Three days later, my Iowa manuscript in hand, I read it again before a group gathered in the building so much of glass on my campus near the Pacific, and it was then that the young blonde lady came and attracted my wife's attention with a whisper and delivered the slip of paper into her hand.

* * *

MY FATHER died in a post office on West 43rd Street, just off Fifth Avenue, in Manhattan where he was born November 5, 1895. I am told that he turned to a stranger and said, "I'm not well today," posted an envelope to my sister in Minnesota, and fell. Once, on Vandeventer Avenue in St. Louis several years ago, I saw a man fall and die, and I suppose it was like that—the vehicle came, and we who had formed a small crowd dispersed and carried on. I did not

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attend my father's funeral. He had not attended *his* father's funeral. I count upon my sons to break the chain. I want a splendid funeral with a blistering oration by a first-rate wit, cremation, and my ashes spread upon the playground where Tom Gaffney and I grew, though I suppose there's some regulation against it. (Do it at night then.)

Of course, if you're a writer and your father dies, you want to write something right away about your father. But experience had taught me the danger of summoning emotion before its time. Feeling no authentic grief, I waited.

Meanwhile there were simpler matters before us. My father's residence, long concealed from our family, was discovered by my brother at a hotel on West 45th Street, the hotel where I had stayed in June, 1956, when my father and I last met. My presence there had been known to him, but his was not to me, and I wonder in what way he was impressed, if at all, by a symbolism so neat no writer of fiction would dare it, whereby taste had independently led father and son into the same neighborhood and the same hotel. In a letter written three days after my father's death my brother describes the room: "The room is typically Dad's: an Underwood typewriter, papers strewn all over, a box of rubber bands, paper clips and erasers, scribbled memos (many of which are entirely illegible) and pickled beets in the refrigerator." The room—pickled beets excepted—is also typically mine. I am writing in just such a room.

My principal project during 1959 had been the effort to adapt *Wake Up, Stupid* to television. My principal project during 1960 would be the adaptation of another novel, *Bang the Drum Slowly,* for the Broadway stage, this second project as doomed as the first, a fact which the writer William Gibson and the director Arthur Penn seemed to know even as they poured time and money into it. The three of us met together in April, and again in October: each meeting provided me with the fringe benefit of a return to Mount Vernon, where I visited my mother, now wearing her widowhood with all philosophy, and slept again in my brother's apartment in the house of Tom Gaffney. I had now, after long absence, returned home three times in twelve months. The shock of memory and recall was becoming displaced by the cooler view of the casual repetition of things, of the quality of recurring life underlying all apparent change.

A certain proportion of my time during these early weeks of the year was spent running back and forth between my home and City Hall to notarize documents for my mother's lawyer, a labor often complicated by New York's and California's conflicting notions of proper verification. In a related matter (the death of my father's brother Percy) I found myself 1/54th owner of a cold-water building in Manhattan, which the city of New York demanded I rehabilitate at an estimated cost of $11,000. Determined to avoid imitating my father's career in real estate, as quickly as possible I signed away my equity.

Thus my last tie was broken with the ventures begun by my father's father, Jacob. But later in the month my sister's first child was born, named Jacob—in Minnesota, half Jew, half Iranian. "Look," my father had written on the occasion of my sister's marriage to her Iranian husband—tossing off a revealing slip—"what a wonderful son-in-law [sic] she fished up for herself." His fantasy enthroned her Queen of Iran:

> Did you ever dream that your sister would ever become Esther II, Queen of Persia. You know the story how Haman wanted to do things to the Jews, when Xerxes—if that's how you spell it—was King. And Mordecai if that's how you spell it—your real name is just that—if I remember correctly—and then the Queen interceded and saved everybody. If you have forgotten re-read it in the Book of Esther—circa 500 B.C. Do you think Martha would intervene as did the first and less beautiful Queen Esther?

In EARLY March the Ford Foundation awarded me a grant of $7,500 to free me to write a play, and I could now count (including one abortive effort for C.B.S.'s Playhouse 90 and Gibson-Penn) $20,000 for plays for which no actor had ever been cast: the wry observation that in America some writers live well enough on grants and options began to assume for me a certain reality. On March 16 I won $1,050 on Groucho Marx's quiz, "You Bet Your Life," for knowing who wrote *The Man Without a Country,* for saying the "secret word" (*chair*), and because my quiz partner knew the name

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of the founder of the Boy Scouts. About this time my sister wrote from Minnesota that while marching in a peace parade she was asked by an acquaintance if I were still the "same," to which she had felt herself compelled to reply that I had "turned mechanical." She cited my use of a rubber stamp on my mailing envelopes. The symbol was reasonably apt.

In April, still idle, my lounging disposition led me to two events, each with its moment of illumination, like something seen in the glass.

To celebrate my Ford Grant my wife and I decorated our mantelpiece with glossy photographs of Henry Ford, and invited eleven friends to dinner. Henry Ford, for many intellectuals, represents an era of anti-Semitism; indeed, my own reaction to him goes deep enough to prevent my buying a Ford car. The fact of Ford money now lavished upon intellectual workers—often upon Jews—can seem a hopeful commentary upon American possibility. Punctuated by glossy pictures over the fireplace, it turns to comedy. On this particular evening the comedy turned to jokes, Jewish jokes, artifacts as real as Indian arrowheads. We told all the Jewish jokes we knew, commenting, as I recall, upon the consistency of their thematic center: "survival jokes," somebody called them, for they seemed to stress the resilience of the Jews, at least in America, where, with more than half a chance, we have demonstrated a generally marked capacity to convert limitations to triumphs. There was much laughter, cumulatively ascending.

Then, in a moment of pause, a lovely blonde lady—sufficiently innocent, Gentile, married to a Jew—asked in purest wonder, "Why don't you just assimilate?" To this my friend Mark Linenthal, arriving late from another party, replied, as he was removing his coat, "It can't be done, I've tried."

Identity is a principle. The repartee, in the instant of enveloping laughter, fixed itself in that phrase for me—*identity is a principle*. Seen in this way, Jewish identity gives sustenance for Jewish intellectuals not so much to religious forms and rituals as to points of character, principle, and social conviction.

The evening of jokes led to a related event three weeks later. With Linenthal and two other persons I agreed to formalize the jokefest before an academic audience at our college. We took to the stage of our theater, we would tell jokes, and the proceeds would go to charity. When my turn came I defensively announced that my first joke would not be so much funny as merely long-dwelling in my memory, a joke my father told many times, to illustrate many things: Down on the Lower East Side two sailors enter a tavern. Here they encounter a man talking religion. They listen awhile, and then dash into the street, see an old Jew, and proceed to beat him up. Luckily, people gather and soon manage to rescue the old Jew. Someone asks the sailor, "What are you beating up this poor old harmless Jew for?"

"Because the Jews killed Christ," one of the sailors replies.

"But that was two thousand years ago," he is told.

"I know," replies the sailor, "but we just heard about it."

To my surprise—to my puzzlement, my astonishment, and my distress—the audience laughed generously at a joke I had always thought tedious. I had meant to demonstrate only its sodden quality, not its virtue, but the laughter restored it for me, and my father, too, renewing my interest in him, as if not his joke but he himself had joined us upon that stage, and charmed our audience.

Assimilation impossible! My father's old joke as good as new! Was that not the very point of the joke? It was a new thought, a new arrangement, a new image to go with my image in glass, and with nights in the house of Tom Gaffney. Moments were reaching for connections, summer was coming, and John F. Kennedy was campaigning for the nomination.

TOMORROW is the Fourth of July. In a little compartment so icily cool that my bursitis aches (if I can't turn off the air-conditioner I'll turn back at Denver) I am riding the San Francisco Overland into the Middle West. Last winter, Iowa. This summer, Indiana. I am reading a box of my father's letters loaned to me by my sister. They had been written to my mother during the year 1938–1939, when my father and I shared an apartment in the house on 57th Street. My mother, brother, and sister had gone—been sent—to Florida, for my moth-

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er's health. (I am also reading nineteen manuscripts written by nineteen ladies I am to meet in Indiana. It strikes me that none of these ladies will be a writer, and I am beginning to wonder about myself: it is two full years since my last hard labor.)

I am shattered by these letters of my father. He is more various than I had known, and his moods are wide-ranging. He is one moment solicitous husband, then scolding husband, then guilty husband, telling my mother of his love for her, pleading with her to return, to guard the children; on the other hand, economize, don't return too soon, he fearfully misses her but somehow manages to live without her. He reminisces of years gone by and predicts good days, describing the new life ahead in the sweet-smelling air of the clean suburbs.

For me—perhaps because I am its subject—his most eloquent letter is an essay upon his incompatibility with his sixteen-year-old son. He complains of the disparity of our interests, of the bad smell in the gymnasium of the 92nd Street Y.M.H.A., where I insist he watch me play basketball; I am all action and he all meditation, I am all society and he all solitude, I all jazz and he all Sunday symphony. God knows I was a drag, I guess.

He writes her once a day, and sometimes twice. He accounts for every hour. But more than twenty years later, examining his letters beneath the light of my own Journal, I conclude that precision was sometimes a mask. He was also jazz and action.

He was then only five years older than I now am. Availed of the bachelor opportunity, mentioning the ladies who took supper with us, he argued for the defendant in a case my mother's innocence never pressed: Can *he* help it if women pursue him in the hope of free food? Can *he* help it if he is handsome and irresistible (joke)? Anyhow, don't worry, as soon as these ladies find out how little money he has they'll disperse.

I am stunned, not by the facts but by the style. My father's rhythms are my rhythms, mine is his, like the rhythm of the gait in the glass. His sentences are structured as mine are, his pet phrases are often mine, the very arrangement of his page is mine. His commas are placed as I would place them, not by rule but by voice: our voices pause in the same place. I am my father's jazz. Even his inconsistent spelling—*accomodate* for *accommodate*—is mine. I must have asked, and he told me wrong.

In Indiana I can only tell my nineteen ladies what Norman Mailer told me—something you are withholding. Dear, lovely ladies, you know more than you're telling. Write out your broken hopes and outlaw fantasies. Identity is a principle. Care who you are. Tell how it really is to be who you really are. You won't sell your book to *Cosmopolitan,* but you will—in a phrase of Katherine Anne Porter's I am fond of quoting—"add a little something, even if it is the merest fraction of an atom, to the sum of human achievement."

Many of the ladies have chosen pennames to conceal both their identity and their sex. They write of contentment in the small towns—a problem, a crisis, but always a happy outcome—but their imagery betrays their restlessness. Their whores and mistresses are far more vividly realized than their heroines. We are all far from home, we shall never meet again, the talk is free.

MY EDUCATION is farther advanced one Sunday in Bloomington: I meet Richard Ellman. I had read his biography of Joyce and in the reading had been shaken by recognition—perhaps the first of the series of recognitions that were to overtake me: Joyce, too, becomes his own father. Ellman buys me a steak lunch. I feel that I am in the presence of someone who will forgive me all my excess of vanity. Perhaps I am incoherent. I have been talking many long nights to ladies, I am overdosed with wake-up pills, and drunk with the ripening sense of myself as phenomenon. Consider the distance from Poland to Bloomington. My father owned three apartment houses, but I own the entire United States. My friend Tom Gaffney is about to be nominated for President under the assumed name of John Kennedy (the Democrats are assembling at Los Angeles).

Tuesday I leave. I am exhausted. I stay overnight at the Severin in Indianapolis, an old hotel across the street from the railroad depot. In my room the television beams an old rite. It is the Democratic convention. "Kennedy," say the voices of the men with the headphones, promising to bring us the face of the likely winner, and I sit peering with burning eyes at a television machine

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so incongruous in a hotel so quaint it still serves liquid ink in a ball-point age of airships and Catholic probabilities. I write in my Journal. Will they bring us his face in the night? I try to watch, but before the ink is dry I am asleep.

No matter. What! Tom Gaffney President? Inconceivable! I doubt that he can possibly be nominated, nor win if he is, nor properly serve if he does. His smile will reveal he knows too much. Enemy of fakery, he who ranged with me over all the possibilities of faith and doubt down all the streets of Mount Vernon, N.Y.—Presidents should be grave and clean-cut men of diminished but reliable passion. When I awake it is morning, the television is humming but blank, the ink is dry, I dash for my train.

Between trains in St. Louis I am at the television again, All-Star baseball in the dining room of the Jefferson Hotel. Fifteen years ago this month I slept in this hotel upon my first night in St. Louis. I had come as a newspaperman and remained a year. Now I retrace my steps through another chapter of my life, as I have been walking through chapters in Manhattan and Mount Vernon. On Vandeventer Avenue I pass the spot where the man fell dead. The sedate neighborhood where I once lived is largely Negro now. My particular block is hung with despair, its houses falling, its Negroes self-conscious, its whites humiliated. My old house is all Negro, like The Big House in Mount Vernon. I feel that it is my duty to move in again, for this wreckage is my own doing; when I lived here it was my fiercest wish to see the neighborhood integrated. Therefore I must rejoin it now and stand before my old house, shouting, "Don't worry, don't worry, the times will repair themselves, paint up, fix up, and above all cheer up. It is not the end of the world but only a further inevitable stage of the American logic." It was in this old house, now falling down, that I received into my arms from a white mailman trudging the (then) white street my ten free author's copies of my first novel, the story of a Negro whose prophecies were of course only the prophecies of the author, whose Jewishness had impelled him into the keenest relationship with the black man's blackness.

On the train west from St. Louis I heard of Kennedy's nomination.

I ARRIVED home July 15 and resumed work on my adaptation of *Bang the Drum Slowly,* upon which I had been working since April. To free myself of distraction I mailed my father's letters back to my sister, but he was not to be so easily dismissed: on July 18 the Railway Express Company delivered to my door six cardboard cartons containing my father's private papers. What new old jokes would I discover? What new ancestral rhythms? I wanted none of it. I thought my Aunt Ruth had buried him. Resolutely I left him interred in his six boxes sealed with tape and tied with rope, a Lot Shipment it was called, Collect, its Declared Value asserted, and the words *Carried Over* stamped everywhere in red on cartons first intended for Carstair's Whiskey and Bellows Distilled Dry Gin. My father never drank.

Three weeks later I mailed the completed adaptation east to Gibson and Penn. I relaxed; again the television; Olympics in Rome. Most of what the U.S. took, our Negroes took for us. Here were passion and desire in bursting lungs. Break the tape and you win more than a medal: you win new neighborhoods. But what would happen when all was integrated? Where would the next fresh wave of American energy come from once all the strains were assimilated, all the desire or all the immigrant memory erased? The thought moved me. Assimilation was not impossible but undesirable. *It can't be done, I've tried.* That must have been what he meant: undesirable. Maybe it was what Mailer meant. Since the thought moved me I tended to think of it as original, it entered me, I forgot its sources until now.

When I wasn't watching the running and jumping at Rome I read—with an air of determined detachment, assuring myself it was only a way of passing the month—the papers in my father's boxes. It was swiftly done: from so rich a vein a greedy son could afford to mine sparingly. I held out only so much wealth as might be contained in one *Chart of Litigations,* one *Memorandum in Behalf of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York,* and one *Affidavit, Memorandum in Opposition to Motion for Leave to the Court of Appeals and Appendix*—each bearing upon that single case at law, that *magnum opus* of my father, that Great American Novel, that Epic Poem, his burden, his hope, his curse, that

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last stand which tried his moral intelligence, and which defined his ceaseless conflict with society.

My father was charged, in the first of the twenty actions or proceedings on the *Chart of Litigations* with "commingling" the funds of a certain client with his own. It is a most serious charge against an attorney. My father argued (counsel for himself) that a corporation (he was his own corporation, too) could deposit sums where it pleased. So much is true, and yet, had I been upon his jury, I should have found him guilty of the act of commingling. Bound as I would have been by the beautiful, symmetrical, all-enclosing logic of judicial relevance, no other course would have been open to me.

But why, once the commingling was established ("A mere inadvertence," my father explained, with what must have been a smile not recorded in the transcript), did he load the courts with nineteen additions to the *Chart?* "A veritable maelstrom of litigation ensued and still continues," a Referee's affidavit declared six years after the first action, "with no end in sight."

> In pleading after pleading and affidavit after affidavit, Finkelstein filed what Mr. Justice Eder in one of the cases correctly called "a combination of confusion, of diatribe, and of an inextricable mixture of some relevant and a mass of irrelevant, redundant and scandalous statements and allegations.

Attaboy, Pop! For even the commingling itself was "strange conduct," the Referee observed, since the financial advantage to my father was doubtful. "The evidence fails to show that anyone suffered monetary loss through this strange conduct." It was "devious and incomprehensible," the Referee declared, amounting to "vengeful malice."

Ah, there we are! Vengeful malice! With scandalous statements and allegations he accused referees, judges, and attorneys of conspiracy, bribe-taking, casefixing, and nepotism, applying to the present case, with eloquent irrelevance, all that he had seen in thirty years at the bar. Alas, it was true but inadmissible. The law is fact, fiction is fiction, and he was a lawyer, not a writer. At the law you must prove what you know, but all he really knew was what the old joke told him—two sailors, an old Jew, and a clear immigrant memory of injustice.

I closed the boxes and piled them in a dry place underneath the cellar steps, where they remain, two on three and one on top.

I WATCHED the first of the Kennedy-Nixon television debates. My mind made up, I was searching not for a choice but for an enthusiasm, not for a mere expedient obstacle to Richard Nixon but for an enthusiasm which might make my pressure ardent on the lever in the booth. Now I saw it—a moment unplanned, truly candid. One seldom sees such a moment on television, except by mistake. It was this: Nixon was speaking, not dully, not stupidly, not without intelligence, but with a false, mock concern, when suddenly he took a deep breath, as if before diving, suddenly remembering (perhaps seeing a face on the sideline) someone who had whispered to him in the moment before air-time, "Don't forget, show enthusiasm." It was in that deep-breathing moment that the camera, for the flicker of a second only, passed across Kennedy's face and found him smiling, and with the smile went a small sigh, just the sort of smile and sigh Tom Gaffney would have smiled and sighed at me at a moment when even our enemy heard in his own voice the depths of his own falsity and dove for enthusiasm, but surfaced with nothing but seaweed. Doubting that such a moment would be permitted again, I turned the set off, vowing to vote for the candidate with the immigrant memory, hoping then, and still, that he might transcend all else and be his greatness in our necessary hour. Anyhow, it was the only hope on the ballot.

At Kennedy's inauguration Robert Frost, dazzled by sun and snow, was unable to read the new poem he had prepared for the occasion, but he could recite an old one. I thought I knew what it meant. Later, hearing that Frost had told Kennedy, "Be an Irishman," I thought I knew what that meant, too.

> *. . . Something we were withholding made us weak*
> *Until we found out that it was ourselves*
> *We were withholding from our land of living,*
> *And forthwith found salvation in surrender.*

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*R. H. S. CROSSMAN*

# THE POLISH MIRACLE

IT WAS a Sunday evening in the middle of last August. Two Warsaw journalists were plying me with excellent French brandy and even better Polish stories, in the Hotel Bristol where I had just returned from a lengthy and exhausting tour of the Polish countryside. "Have you heard our latest joke?" one of the journalists asked. "Ulbricht and Novotny have just proposed an extension of the Rapacki plan. The atom-free zone in Central Europe should be made meat-free as well.

"And let me beg you, if I may be serious for one moment," the story-teller added, "not to embarrass us in anything you write about your trip, by odious comparisons between the food surpluses our free peasants are producing and the shortages created by Czech and German collectivization. Agriculture is one Polish success we don't want to see advertised—particularly in Western newspapers."

Early next morning, I flew on to East Berlin. I had arranged to write an article on the anniversary of the Wall, but at my first meeting with the German Communists, my hosts, who knew I had been studying Polish agriculture, brought along a farming expert who at once began to cross-examine me. When I said that no one could fail to notice the difference between the food surpluses in Poland and the food crisis in the German Democratic Republic, he suddenly lost his temper and shouted at me: "They won't be allowed to carry on like that much longer. You saw for yourself how the *kulak* is coming back in Poland. They cannot be tolerated."

These remarks give a hint of the crisis in the Communist world caused by the Polish Miracle. I use the word "Miracle" advisedly. When measured in terms of economic statistics, the revival of the Polish countryside which I witnessed last summer may not rank with the revival of West German capitalism under Erhard. But it is certainly a political miracle that Gomulka should have felt able to achieve this revival by a total abandonment of collectivization.

Indeed it is impossible to appreciate the significance of the Polish Miracle until we realize just how heretically Gomulka has behaved. Nothing is of more central importance in Communist dogma than the *kolkhoz*. And nothing has provided such a spectacular failure in Communist practice. In stating this, I do not mean to suggest that the *kolkhoz* belonged to the original Marxist-Leninist doctrine which inspired the Bolshevik revolutionaries. Marx himself had very little to say about either the methods or the institutions to be employed in transforming capitalism into socialism. Anyway he confidently assumed that the dictatorship of the proletariat would first be established, not in a backward country with a primitive peasant economy, but in a highly developed West-

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ern nation such as France or Germany where capitalism would already largely have fulfilled the tasks in the countryside which the Kremlin has been forced to allot to the *kolkhoz*—namely: (1) the elimination of small-scale peasant production; (2) the driving into the towns of most of the peasants; and (3) the transformation of agriculture into a highly mechanized industry, organized in large units and relying on organized wage-earners whose skills and conditions had been assimilated to those of industry.

The countryside Marx envisaged, in fact, when he thought about agriculture under socialism was not that of Russia in 1917 nor even of Poland in 1945, but of 20th-century North America and Britain where capitalism had already eliminated not merely the peasant economy but the peasant mentality as well, and where ultra-efficient farms constantly break new records in production per acre and production per worker, of crops for which there is no effective demand.

THE revolution, however, took place not in an industrialized Western democracy but in Russia, with the result that agriculture suddenly became not only the biggest but also the most intractable problem that the revolutionaries faced. Lenin "solved" it by giving the land outright to the peasants and so buying their political support. But this "solution" has faced every Communist government since then with a painful dilemma. Unless they were prepared to accept an extremely slow evolution from peasant to industrial economy, the Communists had to find methods of modernizing agriculture more effective than those prevalent in Western Europe. For after Marx published *Das Kapital,* it became clear that the elimination of the peasantry by modern capitalism was being slowed down if not stopped altogether by the working of representative institutions. Parliaments selected by universal suffrage were dominated by a right-wing alliance of peasant parties and large land-owners, sufficiently powerful to extract from the state the protection of inefficient home agriculture against competition from cheap overseas foodstuffs.

Although they needed the support of the peasants in order to achieve power, the Communists were not prepared to protect them after the revolution, since they felt that such policies would fatally retard the rapid industrialization on which they had set their hearts. They assumed without question that in order to achieve "Socialism in one country," the private landowner, whether a big landlord or a small peasant, must be eliminated; and both the manpower and the capital for rapid industrialization must be extracted from agriculture. The peasants must be compelled to deliver sufficient food to the towns to ensure a steadily improved standard of urban living, without themselves obtaining a fair return for their labor. Hence the need for an institution which, while purporting to protect and improve the independent peasants' way of life, would in fact destroy their independence and impose urban priorities on the countryside.

Almost by accident, the institution adopted for this purpose was the *kolkhoz* or collective village. As long as Lenin was in control, no decision was reached to impose a standard pattern on Russian agriculture. Instead, a number of experiments in cooperation and socialized farming were launched. It was only during Stalin's first Five-Year Plan that the *kolkhoz* became the chosen instrument of collectivization. But the very fact that it aroused such fierce opposition among the peasants and had to be imposed on them by force, elevated the *kolkhoz* into a dogma and made any criticism of it heresy of the gravest kind.

It was almost inevitable therefore that in 1945 the satellite governments of Eastern Europe, instead of developing their own national experiments in agrarian socialism, accepted the Russian *kolkhoz* as their model. Completely slavishly, they proceeded to repeat all the brutal miscalculations and mistakes of Soviet collec-

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tivization, deceiving their peasants with the promise that they should henceforward own their own land, and then bullying them into giving up their fields, their machinery, and finally their livestock to the *kolkhoz* established in each village by a handful of party agitators. By the early 1950's, mass collectivization was well under way in every country in Eastern Europe—with the single exception of Yugoslavia, where a peasant revolt had been narrowly averted by Tito's hasty disavowal of the *kolkhoz,* along with the rest of Stalinism. And in the Far East as well, the Russian pattern was being faithfully repeated by the Chinese Communists despite their peasant origin and their practical understanding of rural problems.

* * *

IT IS A great pity that so few Westerners have bothered to see for themselves how the *kolkhoz* works. Most travelers behind the Iron Curtain concentrate their attention on urban and industrial life, and are content to see the factories, crèches, schools, hospitals, and theaters which the Communists in all cases are anxious to show them. All these visitors see of agriculture, which is still by far the largest activity, and of the countryside where from 40 per cent to 70 per cent of the population still live, are a few carefully selected tourist beauty spots. Yet, as I have now proved for myself in no less than five countries—Russia, China, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and East Germany—a request to make a detailed study of life in the *kolkhoz* is enthusiastically welcomed. Elaborate arrangements are made to enable the visitor to travel extensively, to see everything on his list, and to talk at length with all kinds of people, from the bureaucrats at the Ministry of Agriculture to disgruntled peasants in the collectives.

Unfortunately, in Russia as well as in China—which I visited just when the communes were being established—I was traveling alone; and I could not check against the considered judgments of real professional farmers the amateur impressions of a socialist politician who has married into a farm, and who now spends his weekends trying to supervise it. In 1961 and 1962 I took care to make good this defect by suggesting to the Czechoslovak and Polish governments that I should bring a group of British agriculturists to see their countryside at harvest time. Both governments agreed and as a result I was able to make these two tours in the company of three members of the Labor party's Agricultural Advisory Committee —all of them farmers on a scale that would cause them to be denounced in the Communist world not as mere *kulaks* but as landlords.

The division of labor on which we agreed was that I should listen to the official speeches, question the bureaucrats, and cross-examine our hosts on the collective farms, while my three farmer friends looked round for themselves and then put their supplementary questions based on what they had seen. Of course, traveling with Communist guides and talking through Communist interpreters, we were looking down on the peasant from the top floor of Communist society, and we could not expect to make much personal contact with him, even in Poland. But no Communist guide, however clever, can divert you from seeing whether crops are good, whether fields are clean, whether machinery is well looked after and livestock intelligently handled. And though we could not hope to discover what the peasants really were thinking, we could certainly see how they were living.

The one overwhelming impression I got from these tours was of the utterly mechanical way in which each of the non-Russian Communist governments had imposed the Stalinite pattern on its own countryside. Once one understands how a Russian state farm and a Russian *kolkhoz* works, one knows exactly what to expect in every other Communist country—even down to the smallest detail. What a contrast, I could not help feeling, with Israel

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—a tiny country but one that contains within it an astonishing variety of collectivist patterns. There is not only the difference between *moshavim* and *kibbutzim* but within each there are numbers of important variations in the form of cultivation and the methods of keeping livestock.

East of the Iron Curtain, this variety ceases and is replaced by set rules and standard practices, extending as I saw for myself even to such details as the number of cows per worker on a dairy farm. In 1958, I visited within a month, first a state farm on a *kolkhoz* in White Russia, and then a state farm on a people's commune near Peking—each with a dairy herd. In both I asked the same questions about the labor force and received exactly the same answers. Although the size of the dairy herd and conditions varied enormously, there was always one full-time worker to 12 cows when they were milked by hand, and one to 16 cows when they were milked by machine. I should add perhaps that the Chinese are fond of neither butter nor milk, and there is therefore only a limited amount of dairy farming in China. But what there is of it seemed to conform precisely to the Russian pattern, just as the Chinese and Russian cowmen gave almost identical answers. And when I said that in the Western world a cowman will milk up to 50 cows without difficulty and without assistance except on his day off, I was met with that look of incredulity which blanks out all Communist faces when they are confronted with a fact that does not fit into their intellectual pattern —a look which combines a loyal conviction that you are a capitalist liar, with a disloyal suspicion that there may be something in what you say.

The *kolkhoz,* in fact, is a monstrous straightjacket, strapped by Stalin on to the back of Russian agriculture with a disastrous effect that has been repeated outside Russia since 1945. Quite recently, as a result of Khrushchev's liberalization policy, some local variants of the pattern have been emerging, even in such ultra-orthodox states as East Germany and Czechoslovakia. But these minor departures are insignificant compared with the uniformity that has been imposed on the peasant throughout the Communist world in the sacred name of progress.

THE fairest way to judge the *kolkhoz*—which the Poles have so dramatically abandoned—is to examine it in the country where it is most efficiently managed. Along with the East Germans, the Czechs are the most Westernized and most highly industrialized people in the Communist world; and their peasants, before the Communist coup in 1948, were known as good farmers with excellent Cooperatives. Here, if anywhere, the *kolkhoz* could be made to work. And the Czechs have certainly tried. The countryside is 100 per cent collectivized—as one can see from the air. Flying over the mountains which divide West Germany from Czechoslovakia, one suddenly notices that the patchwork quilt of Bavarian peasant strips has been replaced by the huge fields of the Bohemian plain. If you look carefully, you can tell whether you are passing over a state farm or a *kolkhoz,* by noticing whether there is still a patch of strip farming close to the village. If there is not, it is a state farm since these are worked by salaried managers and employ agricultural workers who cultivate no land of their own. On the other hand, in most of the collectives the members still possess the famous "private half hectare" as well as a private cow and a couple of pigs.

Motoring through the villages—particularly in Slovakia, which, before the war, was an agricultural slum—we could see the achievements of the *kolkhoz* at close range. In each village, all the old farmyards are being left to crumble away. On the leeward side, where the smell blows away, magnificent new buildings are being erected—the collective cowsheds, pig-sties, broiler factories, silos, and shelters for the new collectively-owned wheat, maize, and potato harvesters. All these new buildings

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—as well as the thirty or forty new homes we saw going up in each village—are a demonstration of the Communist determination to industrialize peasant production and bring rural life up to the standards of the towns.

I doubt if there is a peasant in the world more efficient than the Czech, or more independent-minded. He used to be his own master working his own land in his own time. Now he is a member of a work brigade, awakened at 5:30 each morning by the voice of the *kolkhoz* manager, barking the day's orders through the loudspeakers. He used to have an independent income. Now he is paid for piece-work, partly in money and partly in kind.

How efficient is the Czech *kolkhoz?* The state of both the fields and the farm equipment, as we saw it during the harvest, was as good as in any Western European country; and if the livestock was unimpressive, it is only fair to remember that many of the cows are the progeny of draft animals which the individual peasants brought with them less than ten years ago, when they joined the *kolkhoz.*

There are just two snags about Czech collectivization. In the first place, the average age of the *kolkhoz* member is now well over 50. Only the peasant too old and too rooted to escape stays on the land. Most of the boys and girls have either fled into the towns or live in the villages, traveling miles by bus to a job in industry or the public services. If one of the objects of collectivization was to reduce rural overpopulation, this is a target which in Czechoslovakia has been over-achieved.

The second snag is the obstinate reluctance of the Czech collective farmers to sell their products at the low prices obtainable. Of course, the Compulsory Deliveries must be fulfilled; but beyond that point the Czech peasantry is showing that the *kolkhoz* can be used, not to serve but to frustrate the demands of the government. The Five-Year Plan dominates the life of the peasant. Already in 1962, he knows the extra tons of wheat and extra head of cattle which each acre must carry in 1967. He acquiesces—and when consulted about the plan makes sure that his target is nice and low! In Communist Czechoslovakia, the Good Soldier Schweik is now the Good Farmer Schweik; and in the countryside there is a gigantic gray market where the collective farms get together to defeat the demands of the state. Even ten years after collectivization, the stubborn peasant mentality, which the *kolkhoz* was specifically designed to eradicate, is still as strong. It is just possible that the huge amounts of capital invested in Czech collective farming have been justified in terms of food production: it is quite certain that it has not been justified in terms of food delivery.

* * *

Last August I saw the other side of the shield. Poland is the only country in the Communist world where steady increases in agricultural production are being recorded year by year. It is also the only Communist country which successfully combines plenty of food for all its inhabitants with the role of an efficient food exporter to Western Europe. The Poles are now eating better than any of their Communist neighbors; and they are also providing the British consumer with bacon as good as anything the Danes provide, eggs, and best quality butter. Sales of foodstuffs abroad now comprise 18 per cent of Poland's total exports.

What gives this agricultural revival such enormous political importance is the fact that it has been achieved as a direct result of Gomulka's decision six years ago, after the Posnan riots, to abandon collectivization and permit the Polish peasant to walk out of the *kolkhoz.*

Today, 87 per cent of Poland's arable land is privately farmed by the peasants, 12 per cent by state farms, and only 1 per cent by collective farms. And this movement away from the *kolkhoz* is still proceeding: last year 64 new collectives were established, but 231 were wound up. And the reaction from collective to private own-

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ership has recently been strengthened by the restoration of a completely free market in agricultural land. The Polish peasant is now free either to sell off his land to a private buyer or, if he is elderly, to let the state have it and receive a pension instead. He is also free, once he has fulfilled his Compulsory Deliveries, to sell the rest of his produce in the completely free markets which exist all over the country. Yet despite this freedom of choice, he prefers to market 80 per cent of his produce through the socialist sector. It is this willingness of the peasant to deliver his produce to the state which distinguishes Poland from all her Communist neighbors.

How has this miracle been achieved? The answer is delightfully obvious to a Westerner, if not to a Communist. Once Gomulka had thrown away the stick of collectivization, he was compelled to rely on the carrot of a price system favorable to the peasant. Only 30 per cent of total food production is now taken from the peasant in Compulsory Deliveries. Another 30 per cent, including all milk, is marketed by the peasants through their own central Cooperatives. Another 40 per cent, including bacon, sugar beet, oil-seeds, and eggs, is sold under long-term contracts to state factories. This contract production is a very important factor in the Polish Miracle. But it is not a Communist invention. Before the war, bacon factories, for example, concentrating exclusively on the British market, had been established in many parts of the country, catering for peasants in a radius of twenty to thirty miles. Because the peasants were primitive and incapable of doing it for themselves, the bacon factories laid down the precise animal they required, controlled the breeding, and even provided much of the foodstuffs. In return they guaranteed to accept every pig the peasants produced at a fixed price, provided it passed the standard laid down by the factory. In 1945, the contract system was resumed—the only change being that the factories were now state owned. Collectivization, however, threatened to destroy it altogether, and it is only since the retreat from the *kolkhoz* that the state factory has come into its own, providing by far the most effective incentive to modernization that we saw in Poland. Our Communist guides, when pressed, did not deny that the relationship between the peasant and the state factory to which he delivered his bacon is very similar to that between the individual farmer and the cooperative bacon factory in Denmark.

Of course the peasants complained that they are over-taxed. In fact, though rent has been officially abolished, each peasant pays a land tax graded according to the quality of his soil, which comes to exactly the same thing. In addition they make their Compulsory Deliveries—a harsher form of taxation, which is all the more irritating because they are excluded from every kind of social service except education. The Health Service, for example, is available only to the agricultural worker on a state farm: the peasant, as well as any worker he employs, must find a private doctor—and usually there aren't any in the countryside.

BUT THOUGH the peasant has his legitimate grievances, the fact remains that it is industry and the urban population that are paying the bill for the failure of collectivization. Last year, for example, real wages in industry only advanced by 2.7 per cent, but the figure for the peasants was no less than 11 per cent. In recent years, the number of peasant houses with electricity has doubled. Four hundred thousand young peasants now own motorcycles. And on every road and land in the countryside you meet the parents of these young people, sitting in their traps and surries behind those magnificent silky grain-fed horses of which they are so proud. It would be very nearly true to say that Gomulka has turned Marxism on its head by making the socialized sector of the economy pay for the improvement of the peasants' lot.

The problem with the decision to aban-

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don collectivization was that it enabled the peasants not merely to regain their own land but to revert to their primitive peasant methods. The size of the plots is ludicrous. Two million peasants each farm twelve acres or less. To make matters worse, these tiny peasant farms usually consist of half-a-dozen strips scattered around the village, and on the death of the owner they are divided up among his children. We visited one village in Silesia which, to judge by its noble red-brick farm houses and farm buildings, had been the home before 1945 of prosperous German *kulaks* or middle peasants. Now it has been taken over by Galicians who have divided up the big houses into one-room flats.

Here was a chance to break with the medieval strip system and give the primitive peasant a new start by dividing up the ample land available into decent-sized plots. But the Communists had found it impossible to do this. After one unsuccessful attempt at collectivization, the peasants had distributed the fields around the village once again into strips. One owner of some 20 acres proudly showed me where his 5 plots lay all around the village. "But wouldn't you save labor by having them all in one place?" I asked him. "Maybe," he replied, smiling craftily, "but what would happen if a thunder-storm hit one side of the village? We have to share the risk."

Parcelization gets worse and worse, and with the unit of production so ridiculously uneconomic, mechanization is almost impossible. Combines, which are universal in Czechoslovakia, are not to be found except on the state farms. The total number of tractors in Poland is only 30,000—16,000 communally owned and 14,000 in private hands. As I saw for myself, much of the corn is still cut with sickles, and a farmer considers himself go-ahead if he uses his fine horses to pull a kind of flail reaper, which I had previously seen only in Victorian pictures.

What chances are there, since compulsion is now out of the question, to persuade the peasants voluntarily to abandon their primitive methods and accept modernized farming? Alas! Nearly all the peasants we talked to in the villages, on the fields, and by the roadside, during a tour which took us three-quarters of the way round Poland, were as reactionary as they were prosperous, consumed by a burning hatred of two things—Russia and Communism, which are associated in their minds with modernization and improvement. Under pressure from a foreign visitor, most of them would agree that since Gomulka came to power they have been free to say what they like. Gomulka himself is popular. But I scarcely heard a favorable opinion expressed about the bureaucrats in Warsaw during the whole time of my tour.

Every peasant, of course, wants to make more money. Most of them would like to cultivate more land, if they can be sure of keeping the profits they earn. But even such an obvious reform as a change in the law which permits parcelization seemed to be viewed with suspicion.

In three of the villages we visited, there was only one Communist—the hard-working secretary of everything. And he obviously felt himself a gallant member of a small persecuted minority! The officials from the Ministries who accompanied us on our visits were not much better off. While our interpreters tried in their translation to water down the violence of the peasants' language, they stood uncomfortably in a bunch, obviously anxious lest the proceedings should get out of hand.

* * *

I CERTAINLY did not envy these officials their main job, the establishment in each village of an Agricultural Circle—the primitive form of Cooperative on which the government is relying to introduce modern farming techniques. The name "Agricultural Circle" has been chosen because any reference to "Cooperation" would arouse memories of the detested *kolkhoz,* and the organization is an ingenious gimmick for bribing non-coop-

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erative peasants into *de facto* cooperation without any theoretical recognition that this is what they are doing. The precise method of working is as follows: every year a calculation is made for all of Poland's 40,000 villages in order to assess the exact difference between the price the villagers receive from the state for Compulsory Deliveries and the price they could have got for those same deliveries if they had sold them on the free market. When this sum has been assessed, the amount is duly banked to each village's account.

But there it stays in the bank until the village establishes a Circle. For the Fund may only be used where a Circle has been actually started, and where, furthermore, the members of the Circle have contributed a sum equivalent to 25 per cent of the village fund out of their own pockets. At this point permission is given to use the Fund for a limited number of purposes. The Circle can drain or improve land; or it can buy machines and hire mechanics to drive and maintain them, so that any villager can go to the secretary of the Circle and arrange to have his field ploughed, his grain harvested, or his potatoes transported.

We visited some five of these Circles, and since on each occasion it was necessary to drive some fifty or sixty miles, I suspect that those worth showing to a foreigner were very few in number. Even the Ministry of Agriculture does not claim that more than 5,000 of them actually own a tractor. Moreover, in each of the carefully selected Circles to which we were taken, the peasants we met—although they were desperately anxious to modernize their methods and improve their own earnings—were still suspicious of cooperation.

In one village, the Circle had begun to farm communally some of the large areas of land left derelict since the Germans fled in 1945. The fields were a long way off and when we reached them it was obvious that they were deplorably farmed. Our Ministry guides looked very embarrassed when the peasants eagerly pointed out the contrast between the poorly kept communal fields, and their own beautifully tended strips on the other side of the path. "I suppose this experiment in cooperative farming by your Circle is a first step on the return road to the *kolkhoz*," I said to the village Chairman, rather naughtily. My words must have been faithfully translated, for there was a moment of horrified silence and then uproar as the chairman denounced the *kolkhoz* and told us how the attempt to introduce it was defeated ten years ago.

It is important to remember that, even at the height of the collectivization campaign, only 10 per cent of Poland's arable land was collectively farmed. Yet in every village we visited, the peasants had seen enough of the system to abominate the *kolkhoz;* and they remained deeply and I think quite reasonably suspicious that the bureaucrats in Warsaw might one day feel tempted, if too little progress is being made by voluntary methods, to revert to compulsion once more. Collectivization has never been formally abandoned by the government, and the threat of it hangs like a thunder-cloud over the countryside.

Throughout our tour, our dedicated Communist guide continued to assert to me, in the course of a long series of heated arguments, that the reversion to private ownership was only temporary, and that the final aim still remained a fully collectivized agriculture. But these assertions had a strangely hollow ring, and in this case I feel pretty sure that the hard facts of life will defeat this aim. By his silence, Khrushchev has given his consent to Gomulka's decision to abandon the breakneck revolutionary methods of collectivization, and to try the experiment of changing the peasant by a slow process of voluntary persuasion and passive evolution. Even more recently, by coming to terms with Tito, he has once again made it clear that the *kolkhoz* is no longer regarded in the Kremlin as the sole chosen instrument for

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socializing agriculture. And that is why he is now prepared to turn to the West to find other ways to achieve his ends.

* * *

IN NO FIELD of economic activity is there a larger range of choice. Ever since the great slump of 1929, the idea that classical free enterprise could ever be applied to agriculture has been abandoned by the Western democracies. In its place, we have evolved a wide variety of devices designed to maintain prosperity in the countryside, while at the same time reducing the numbers employed in agriculture and encouraging improvement and modernization. Today we all recognize the need to combine centralized state planning of agriculture with voluntary cooperation, not only in the marketing of produce but in the provision of seed, machinery, etc. In North America, France, and Germany, these schemes are described as democratic; in Scandinavia, as socialist. The semantics do not matter. What is important is the discovery that the modernization of agriculture requires the most skilled combination of central direction and grass-roots cooperation for success. In Western Germany, to take only one example, more than 1,300,000 peasants were transferred from agriculture into industry between 1951 and 1961, without any of the appalling political and economic consequences which Communist ruthlessness creates. And by 1970, when the transitional Seven-Year period ends and the E.E.C. agricultural policy really begins to function, another 750,000 will have been moved. The main method employed by the government in Bonn is a regulation of agricultural prices skillfully designed to eliminate the small peasant while providing his sons plenty of opportunities in an expanding industry under conditions of full employment.

But what are the chances that the Communists can learn the lesson and apply it? Certainly their bureaucrats are not trained to do the kind of tactful "extension" work which the British, American, or Danish farmer has come to expect as a matter of course from government experts or Cooperative representatives. Nevertheless, the Polish government really has no choice in the matter. With the Catholic Church still immensely powerful and eager to exploit any crisis, Gomulka cannot risk open conflict with peasants who still form no less than 38 per cent of the population, and whose stubbornness was enormously increased by the victory they achieved after the Posnan riots. Thus it looks inevitable that Polish Communism, like Yugoslav Communism, will be forced in the foreseeable future to plan for a completely nationalized industrial sector existing alongside a privately owned agriculture, conforming to state requirements not by compulsion but by consent.

But when they see this new attitude adopted in dealing with the peasants, the workers in industry are bound to insist that they too shall be led by carrots instead of being driven by sticks. So it is not only the future of Polish agriculture that is at stake, but the whole concept of totalitarian planning as a short cut to industrialization. For once a Communist government admits that in one section of the economy, a planned free market and voluntary cooperation work better than centrally imposed discipline, the freedom is bound to spread to other sectors of the economy. Poland under Gomulka cannot remain half slave and half free. And the two most powerful national emotions—Catholicism and hatred of Russia—are on the side of the free peasant.

And what is true of the different sectors of the Polish economy is also true of the different national economies within Eastern Europe. The abandonment by both Poland and Yugoslavia of collectivization is having its effect on their neighbors. Everywhere—even in Czechoslovakia where Communism is most monolithic—there is a loosening up and a readiness to permit in the countryside minor departures from the Russian model of collectivization. Since I have not been to

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the Soviet Union since 1958, I cannot report from personal experience on the changes there. But it is clear enough from Khrushchev's impatient speeches and from official articles in the Russian press, that he now recognizes agriculture as far the weakest link in the Communist chain.

I suspect that the turning point was his trip to the U. S. and in particular the days he spent with the corn farmers of the Middle West. Khrushchev has eyes to see and he was obviously overwhelmed by the success story of American agriculture since the New Deal. The soil of Illinois is very good, but it is no better than the black earth of the Ukraine. Yet Khrushchev could see for himself the deadly contrast between the miraculous improvement in both rural production and rural prosperity since the 1930's, and the sullen failure of Russian collectivization. Of course, in speeches he is careful not to compare the two systems, but to urge his own collective farmers to learn what they can from American applied science and technology. But he now knows very well that the *kolkhoz* is not a short cut but a dead end. The best way to maximize food production is to allow your farmers to go on owning their own land, encourage them to work together in genuinely free cooperatives, and when you have earned their good will, subject them to central state directives in return for guaranteed prices.

BUT HOW are these lessons to be applied east of the Iron Curtain? In Poland and Yugoslavia, the retreat from collectivization took place early enough to permit a return to a peasant economy. But in Russia, after thirty years of Stalinite *kolkhoz* and state farm, the recreation of an independent peasantry seems completely out of the question. A vast amount of capital has been invested in machinery and buildings, quite unsuitable for small independent farmers. Even in Czechoslovakia where collectivization has only just been completed, its abandonment could precipitate a counter-revolution.

Nevertheless, I am convinced that, now that the inefficiency of the *kolkhoz* has been demonstrated in terms of production per acre and—even more important—in terms of production per man employed in agriculture, the Kremlin will be compelled to follow Gomulka's example in one respect at least. It will have to relax its pressure on the countryside and permit the collective farmers to retain far more of the product of their labors.

Of course this will mean a far slower rate of industrialization and the end of the spectacular annual figures of economic growth which are the pride of the Communist world. In order to relax the centrally imposed discipline, reduce the Compulsory Deliveries, and raise peasant living standards, the Communists will be compelled to make available far more of the consumer goods which the people in the country passionately desire. That can only be done by cutting capital investment and arms expenditure back to the kind of level which the free electorates of the Western democracies are prepared to tolerate.

In their peaceful competition with the West, the Communists have only been able to keep their rate of growth ahead of ours by dragooning the countryside into submission by means of the *kolkhoz* and deliberately retarding its rate of improvement. Once this artificial unbalance between industry and agriculture, town and country, begins to be reduced, Communism will begin to lose its totalitarian features, and the main gap which now sunders it from Western democracy will be narrowed. For the peaceful competition between democratic and Communist planning will then be taking place on something approaching fair terms; and coexistence which up to now has been merely a political abstraction could begin to become a social and human reality. So far agriculture has been the Achilles' heel of the Communist system. But its very failure could well provide a breach in total planning through which freedom could percolate throughout the Communist world.

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*JEROME CHARYN*

# FAIGELE THE IDIOTKE

## *A Story*

THE NAZIS were marching all over Europe and I could already see them crossing the Atlantic and capturing the Empire State Building or holding maneuvers in Central Park. "Manny," my mother kept telling me, "join up with the Merchant Marines or get a job in a defense plant," but I sat home, without taking a step or making a move. Phil was talking about going to New Orleans. We had both just finished high school and we knew that in a month or two we would be shipped off to the army. If only we had had ten more years to live, we both solemnly agreed, we would have been the greatest painters in the world. "One month," Phil said, "gimme one month in New Orleans and then they can take me away." He wanted me to go with him, but to tell the truth I had never been away from home even for a day and I was scared. New Orleans, it was like the end of the world. "Manny," Phil said, "who knows where we'll be in another three months. They'll bury us both in Africa somewhere." He was right, but I was still afraid to go. "Phil," I said, "if you want to paint, you can paint in the Bronx too." So he went by himself. And I sat home and didn't say a word to anybody and every time I heard the air raid sirens wail I died a little. I could feel my heart contract and dig all the way down to my bowels, looking for some place to hide. It was no joke. I couldn't paint or eat or anything. And then in about a week I got a letter from Phil. "Manny," he said, "it's great." And he told me stories about fantastically dark and fragrant women with melon-shaped breasts and soft, honeyed lips, and now my heart ached and I dreamed about them day and night. Every day I got another letter from Phil with stories about even more fantastic women. "I gotta get out," I said, cursing myself and bemoaning my fate, but I knew I could never work up enough courage to go to New Orleans. With each day that passed I felt as if I were losing a year out of my life. I had to have at least one little adventure. So I stuffed three pairs of pants, some T-shirts, a whole arsenal of paints, and my canvas stretcher into my duffel bag and I took out the hundred dollars that I had kept in a shoe box under my bed—who could trust a bank with the Germans only three thousand miles away? —and one morning when no one was home, I sneaked out, without even leaving a note. I knew that if my mother had been home, she would have been able to stop me in a minute. And then, feeling like some great adventurer, a Leif Ericson or a Daniel Boone, I took the "D" train down to Delancey Street. Holding my duffel bag as if it contained some magnificent treasure, I started walking toward Second Avenue. I tried to find a room, but everywhere I went I was told that all the rooms were

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reserved for soldiers and sailors on leave. "Be a patriot," one woman told me, "and sleep out in the street." Then I steeled myself, and hiding inside a telephone booth with the duffel bag in my lap, I called my mother. At first she laughed and called me a clown, but when I told her I wasn't coming back, she started to cry. "Manny, come home," she said. I held on to the duffel bag as if it were some kind of monstrous doll, and I said, "No. Ma, I'm not a million miles away. I'm down near Delancey Street. I'll call you every Tuesday . . . Ma, I have to get out . . . so send the cops after me . . . Ma, listen. . . ." There was no use talking any more, so I counted to ten, said a quick goodbye and hung up. It started to rain and I panicked a little and sat inside the telephone booth, clutching the duffel bag. A woman wanted to make a phone call, but I glared at her and cursed her under my breath, and finally she went away. I saw a "Rooms for Rent" sign hanging from a fire escape across the street, and right away I felt a little better. I opened the door of the telephone booth tentatively, popped my head out like a wily turtle, felt the rain beat harmlessly on my neck and face, and then, still clutching the duffel bag, I ran across the street.

THE FRONT OF the house was blackened and some of the windows were boarded, but I went inside anyway. A woman with a bald spot at the back of her head and a patch over one eye met me at the door. Two black cats stood next to her with their backs humped threateningly. I almost dropped the duffel bag, and staring dumbly at her I somehow managed to communicate to her the fact that I wanted to rent a room. She took me up three flights of rickety stairs. The floor boards creaked ominously and the two black cats followed us like sentries wherever we went. I took the first room she showed me, and I figured that after I got rid of her, I'd pick up my duffel bag and sneak out. She came up close to me and I thought for a minute that I saw a fang mark on her neck. I swear to God I would have screamed or thrown the duffel bag at her or just simply started to cry, but then she smiled a little shamefacedly and said, "Tell me, you're a Jewish boy?" I no longer noticed the patch or the bald spot, and the fang marks miraculously disappeared. I wagged my head.

"Good," she said, "I usually rent out this room for fifteen dollars but for you let it be ten." The two black cats now brushed against my shoes and started to purr. I felt as if I had been living in the room all my life.

"If you need any soap, or towels, don't be ashamed to ask. There's a toilet on every floor but if it gets to be like Grand Central Station over there just come downstairs to me. Be my guest. My name is Mrs. Geller."

"Mrs. Geller," I said, "the room, is that ten dollars a week?"

"What do you think this is, the Waldorf? Oy," she said, clapping her hands and smiling, "it's a lucky thing for you you're a Jewish boy. Tell me, it's the first time you're in New York? You never rented out a room before. Learn, quick, another landlady would eat you up alive! Don't be a schlemiel, it's ten dollars a month." She started laughing to herself; the patch above her left eye moved up and down unevenly. "Sonny," she said, "be careful, or somebody'll steal off your pants." She straightened out her patch, picked up both cats, and left. I unpacked my duffel bag and inspected the room. The walls were chipped and cracked and the ceiling sagged miserably. There was a sink near the door with two leaky faucets and a corroded pipe that belched all the time. An unvarnished chest with a missing drawer and a lumpy bed with four crooked legs faced each other uneasily in one corner of the room. I killed two giant roaches and an army of silverfish and then approached the bed. I punched the mattress twice and waited eagerly for the bedbugs to appear. I turned the mattress over

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and punched it again. "Wait," I said to myself, "maybe they're just a little shy." I took out my paints and rubbed my palms together for good luck. I searched through my duffel bag and remembered with a groan that I had left my roll of canvas on top of the closet in my mother's room. I cursed myself and then noticed a wrinkled, moth-eaten shade attached to the top of the window. I tore the shade off the window feverishly, removed one of the drawers of the chest, found a nail and two pins, and, singing to myself, tried to stretch the shade across the back of the drawer. But the shade began to crumble, and I flung the drawer halfway across the room. Two gigantic plaster chips fell from the ceiling and almost took out my eye. I began to shiver a little and sat down on the bed. I was ready to pack my duffel bag and run home. And then I closed my eyes and miraculously I had a vision of myself crawling across the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel with a paint brush in my mouth. I opened my eyes and stared hungrily at the ceiling and the walls. I felt inspired. I moved the chest over to the center of the room, loaded my pockets with tubes of paint, and climbed on top of the chest. A woman called, "Faigele, get off the fire escape." I heard a clanging sound outside my window and the chest began to wobble. Pieces of plaster rained from the ceiling and struck both of my shoulders and the back of my head. I jumped off the chest and ran to the window. The fire escape was trembling violently and I thought for sure the world was coming to an end. And then I saw a girl who must have been at least six feet tall climb up the fire escape three steps at a time. Her skirt flared unevenly and exposed her bony kneecaps and her unwashed underwear. She stopped for a moment in front of my window and pressed her angular face against one of the panes. I was startled and stepped back. One of her ears was larger than the other and her eyes seemed hollowed out. She smiled queerly and climbed up to the roof, the steps of the fire escape trembling in her wake. I took two deep breaths and went down to Mrs. Geller. I asked her for a room without a fire escape. "Shah," she told me, "shah. It's only Faigele. She's harmless."

I was furious. "How the hell can I get any work done with her running around like that?"

"Sonny," she said, "you'll get used to her. Shah."

"Why don't you have her arrested or something?"

"Arrested? She's only twelve years old."

Mrs. Geller's cats started arching their backs and right away I calmed down a little. "Well, why don't somebody tell her father?"

"Father? Her father is dead. He was killed in the war. And her mother, she works all day and when she's not working who knows where she is? So what can I do? Who else would take her in with a daughter like that? Should I throw them out in the street better, hah? After all, they're not *goyim*. Faigele's a Jewish girl. This I can guarantee." I don't know what she expected me to say, but now she was the one who was getting worked up. "Go, if you want, pack up and go. I don't care if the whole house moves out. Who needs boarders! I should worry. Faigele stays! That's final!"

"All right, Mrs. Geller, all right. But could you tell her to stay away from my fire escape, huh?"

"No! The girl goes wherever she wants." Then she backed down a little. "Sonny," she said, "you know why they call her Faigele, hah? Faigele, it means bird in Yiddish. I myself gave her that name. Why? Because she reminds me of a bird the way she runs around and hops all over. And she's kind like a bird too. The lousy kids around here they make up other names for her. But if you ask me, they're the ones who are the dopes."

She looked at me pleadingly, so I slapped my sides and said, "Let her use the fire escape, okay?" and I went up to my room. I left the chest in the middle of

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the room and wrote a letter to Phil and gave him my new address. "Phil," I said, "Second Avenue is not New Orleans, I know, but a little freedom is better than nothing. All I've met so far are an idiot girl and a woman with a patch over her eye, but I've only been here for half a day." I had nothing fantastic to tell Phil, so I made the letter short. "I'll mail it tomorrow," I said, and using my pants for a pillow, I went to sleep. I thought for sure I'd have some kind of nightmare about Faigele or Mrs. Geller's cats and I'd start screaming in the middle of the night, but I slept soundly. When I woke up I started to sneeze, and I looked around and saw that half of my body was covered with plaster chips. I heard somebody shout, "Faigele, Faigele, the Idiotke," from the roof. The ceiling began to bulge in five or six places and I protected my head from the bombardment of falling chips. "That's enough," I said, and after putting on my pants, I went right up to the roof. Six kids were up there and they stood around in a circle and all of them were shouting at Faigele. "Faigele the Idiotke," they kept saying, louder and louder. Five of the kids wore black skullcaps. The other kid wore a sailor hat. He was the ringleader and his name was Hymie. Faigele was sitting on the tar floor of the roof with her skirt hitched up to her knees. She was searching for her shoes. Hymie started pumping his arms and said, "Fly, Faigele, fly!" Then the other kids joined in "Fly, Faigele, fly." One kid said, "Let's play hot potata," and he tossed something up in the air that looked like a gigantic loaf of bread or maybe a football. Then I took a closer look and I saw it wasn't a football or anything, it was one of Faigele's shoes. It was the biggest shoe I had ever seen in my life. "Hey," I said to Hymie, "why don't you give her back her shoe, huh?" "No," Hymie said, "not until she flies for us." And then the other kids joined in again. "Fly, Faigele, fly." I tried to grab the shoe, but the kids kept tossing it over my head and shouting, "Hold on to the hot potata." Finally one of the kids dropped the shoe, and I snatched it up before any of them could run over. Now Hymie called the other kids over for a huddle. And meanwhile I stood on my guard, because with kids like these anything could happen. They let out some kind of a crazy cheer and then they all separated. Faigele was still sitting on the tar floor and I wanted to warn her and give her back her shoe, but the kids started picking up dried lumps of tar and they threw them at Faigele and me. "Revenge from the Maccabees," they kept shouting. It was no joke, because some of the lumps were as big as an egg. Faigele was an easy target because she was sitting on the floor, so most of the kids aimed at her. She kept getting pelted with lumps of tar and she didn't even hide her head or anything, so I figured it was time for a little action. I couldn't catch all six of the little bastards at one time, so I went after Hymie. He kept dodging in and out of the clotheslines, and once or twice I tripped and I thought for sure I was going to fall off the roof. But finally I caught him and I gave him a good hard kick in the can to remember me by. Then I looked over and I saw that Hymie's chums had surrounded Faigele and they were getting ready to bombard her. And when they saw me coming, they ran over to the next roof and started in throwing lumps of tar from over there, but they were too far away to do any damage. One of Faigele's shoes was still missing and I looked all over the roof for it. I couldn't find it, so I helped Faigele lace up her one shoe, and then she stood up, limped a little, and started somersaulting crazily across the roof. I guess she was performing for me or something. She ran nimbly along the ledge of the roof, making a noise that sounded a little like a moo. "Faigele," I said, "you'll fall off," but she didn't listen to me or anything. It was lucky for her that we were out of range, because if Hymie's gang had hit her with even one lump of tar, she would have fallen right off the roof. Then Faigele climbed down the ladder that led

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to the fire escape and she disappeared. And I went back down to my room.

ABOUT TEN MINUTES later I heard a thumping sound outside in the hall, and I figured that maybe Faigele was coming up to pay me a visit. But I should have known better. She would have come through the fire escape. And like a fool I opened up the door and was ready to put on a little performance of my own for Faigele, when somebody grabbed me by the shirt and threw me right across the room, and I knew right away it wasn't Faigele. It was Hymie's father. He couldn't have been much more than five feet tall, but his shoulders were almost as wide as the door, and standing there with his huge nostrils flaring and with his arms dangling down almost to his knees, he looked more like an ape than a man. Right away I made up a name for him: King Kong. I wanted to open the window and join Faigele outside on the fire escape, but I was too scared to make a move. King Kong wore an apron that was smeared with dried blood, and I figured to myself that he must be a butcher.

"You," he said, pointing one of his stubby fingers at me, and I felt as if I had just been sentenced to death. "You like to go around kicking kids, huh?" Then he noticed a few tubes of paint that I had left on top of the chest. "A painter boy, huh?" He picked up one of the tubes, tossed it once or twice, and then began to squeeze it. I groaned inwardly as I saw the cap pop off and a snaky string of cobalt blue shoot out of the tube and fall with a plop on the uncarpeted floor. He seemed to be enjoying himself, and one by one he went to work on my tubes of paint. I turned around for a second and saw Faigele peering sadly through the window, and then King Kong, laughing wildly and squeezing out my last tube of paint, started coming toward me, and I must have fainted or something, because the next thing I knew, Mrs. Geller was leaning over me and slapping my face with a lumpy rag. The two black cats were climbing all over me.

"Oy, look at him, he's turning blue. Sonny, get up!"

"I'm all right," I said, "and stop hitting me with that rag, huh?" I shooed the cats away from me and then stood up, dizzily. The whole room was cluttered with lumps of paint and it looked as if a dozen birds had left their mark with a vengeance right on my floor.

"I know the whole story," Mrs. Geller said. "We'll fix him, wait. He thinks he's the boss around here, that gorilla. I'll have him dispossessed, wait. Out in the street he'll go. And Hymie, that little gangster, he'll catch it from me too. Wait!"

"Thanks, Mrs. Geller, I appreciate everything, but I'm a little tired, and. . . ."

"I understand, Sonny. Come down later and I'll make you some soup." She signaled to the two cats and left.

I EXAMINED MYSELF in the mirror, but I couldn't find a bump or even a bruise. Then I heard a light tap coming from the window. I opened the window and looked outside, but no one was around. I noticed a cracked pigeon egg and a rotten carrot on the landing of the fire escape. Presents from Faigele? Probably. The egg and the carrot stank unbearably and I wanted to close the window quickly and leave them out on the fire escape, but I felt that somewhere Faigele was watching me, so I cursed myself, reached out and brought the booty back into the room. I almost fainted again from the smell, but I wrapped the carrot and the egg in some newspaper and dropped them into the bottom of the chest.

The next morning I woke up with my nostrils stinging. The room smelled worse than a sewer and if I hadn't gulped down three glasses of water from one of the leaky faucets, I think I would have choked to death. I ran over to the window and saw a dozen pigeon eggs, a wormy apple, and two blackened turnips sitting out on the fire escape. "Faigele, Faigele," I cried out,

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but no one answered my call. After putting on my T-shirt inside out, I went down to Mrs. Geller. Her two cats glared at me and prepared to hump their backs, but I ignored them completely. I would have taken on King Kong himself had I met him in the hall, that's how furious I was. "Mrs. Geller," I said, "enough is enough. Tell me where Faigele's mother lives?"

Mrs. Geller stared at me woodenly for a moment, and then, after playing nervously with her patch, she said, "On the second floor."

"Which room?"

"The one . . . the one near the stairway. But you won't find her there. She's never home. Tell me, what happened?"

"Later," I said, "later," and I ran up to the second floor. I stood in front of the door near the stairway and knocked on it forcefully with my fist. No light came through the chink at the top of the door, and I knew that no one was home. I sat at the top of the stairs for almost an hour, and then I went up to my room. I stuffed my nostrils with some cotton, and using a rusty tablespoon I scooped the dozen eggs, the wormy apple, and the two blackened turnips into a paper bag. I went down one flight and left the bag with a little note in front of Faigele's mother's door. "The hell with it," I said, more out of mischief than spite, "if I stink everybody out of the house, it's Faigele's fault." I heard someone coming up the steps, and I thought it might be Faigele's mother, so I peered down the darkened stairwell and in the meager light of the tiny lamp at the bottom of the banister I recognized the monstrous shoulders of King Kong, and after chuckling to myself, I ran up to my room.

The next morning there were no pigeon eggs or turnips outside my window, and I thought that maybe now the problem of Faigele was solved. King Kong had destroyed all my Venetian red and cobalt blue, but luckily I had kept a few tubes of paint in my duffel bag. I didn't feel like sneaking home to get my roll of canvas, so I went downstairs, scoured the block like a hungry scavenger, and finally found several large pieces of cardboard outside an abandoned grocery store. "If Picasso can paint on cardboard," I said, trying to console myself, "so can *I*!" On the way upstairs I stopped off at the second floor, but the paper bag was gone. I was eager to get back to work, so I didn't wait around to see if Faigele's mother was at home. I figured I'd try a self portrait, so I arranged my remaining tubes of paint on the chest, posed myself in front of the mirror and started to sketch scratchily on the cardboard with a stumpy blue crayon. Then, instinctively, I turned around and saw Faigele outside on the fire escape. Mrs. Geller's two cats were with her. "Faigele's friends," I said to myself, but I kept on working. I couldn't help it, I had to turn around again, and I saw that Faigele was looking at me in a funny way. She opened her mouth wide and made a sound that was somewhere between a caw and a moo, and I dropped the crayon and started to shake a little. "Oh, my God, she's serenading me," I said with a groan, and I walked over to the window and gently tried to chase her away. But Faigele stood on the fire escape and kept it up. I tried to finish the sketch, but my hand kept shaking, and Faigele's serenade froze my heart a little and made it beat erratically. I charged down to the second floor and beat on the door near the stairway like a wild man with both fists. The door across the hall opened and I saw Hymie come out. "Ma, ma, look who's here!" he said, and, after shaking his can at me, he ran back in. Hymie's mother came over to the door. Her belly hung down like some kind of a pouch, and her ears pointed upward, and she looked more like a kangaroo than anything else. I was trying to think up a name for her too, but then she started talking. "What's the commotion?"

"I'm looking for Faigele's mother."

"Faigele's mother?"

"*Yeah*. Mrs. Geller told me she lives on this floor. Next to the stairs."

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She started laughing, and her pouch heaved up and down uncontrollably. She cupped her hand over her mouth for a second, and said," Excuse me." But her belly kept heaving. "Mrs. Geller told you that? And you believed her yet? Dummy, Mrs. Geller herself is Faigele's mother!"

"Wha?" I said dumbly, and then Hymie's mother walked over to the door near the stairway. I thought she was going to ram it open with her belly, but she just touched the knob and the door opened by itself. I looked inside and saw that it was a storeroom. A monstrous metal crib stood near the door. A metal hoop, some gigantic wooden blocks, and a doll that was taller than I was, were piled behind the crib. Faigele's old toys? Probably.

"Now you believe me or not?" Hymie's mother said.

"What about Faigele's father? Didn't he die in the war?"

She started laughing again, and I had to wait almost a minute before she calmed down. "Can she make up a story! Dummy, nobody knows who Faigele's father is . . . not even Mrs. Geller herself, that gypsy!"

IT STARTED driving me crazy to watch her belly heave, so I went down to Mrs. Geller. Her cats weren't around, and she looked a little lost without them. She took one look at me, and I guess she knew her little game was up. Even the patch over her eye started to sag.

"Mrs. Geller," I said, "why the hell did you make up such a lie?"

She looked around desperately for her cats, and then she raised the patch, trying to compose herself a little, and said, "Sonny, I'm sorry." She started to cry. "I didn't want you to move out. Who can find boarders?" A solitary tear appeared from beneath her patch and dribbled down the left side of her bumpy face. I think I was ready to break down and cry myself, especially when I saw that tear, it was so lonely looking.

"Don't cry, Mrs. Geller," I said, "I like Faigele, I mean it."

She grabbed the end of my T-shirt and started wiping her eyes with it, and I was a little embarrassed, because my belly button showed for a minute.

"Don't be angry with her, Sonny. You protected her before from those little bandits and she was trying to show her appreciation."

"It was nothing, Mrs. Geller. But please tell her not to leave any more eggs outside my window and to stay away from my fire escape. I mean, if she wants to come around once in a while, fine, but Mrs. Geller, the way it is now, I can't get any work done."

"I'll tell her, Sonny, I swear. She didn't mean no harm."

She wanted to kiss my hands, but I pulled them away quickly and put them in my pocket.

"Don't worry, Mrs. Geller," I said, hastily, "who knows, maybe I'll paint Faigele's picture for you one of these days," and, without giving her a chance to say anything else,I went straight up to my room. Faigele and the cats were gone, but about an hour later I had another guest. King Kong. I wasn't expecting him, so I opened the door unsuspectingly, and he pushed his way in. He was holding some kind of a petition.

"Sign it," he said, "sign it."

"Sign what?"

"It's a petition to get Faigele committed. All we need is one more signature and then maybe we'll be able to get some action on it. Sign it, or I'll break your arm!"

I retreated immediately and my whole body started shaking, but I said to myself, "Manny, for once in your life be a *mensch* instead of a mole," and I refused to sign.

"Go 'head," I said, and I offered him my left arm. "Break it if you want, but I'm not going to sign."

He looked at me as if I were some kind of an idiot, and then he folded the petition and put it in his pocket. He shook his head twice and started walking toward

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the door, but he changed his mind, came over to me again and started pleading with me. "What's the matter, ain't you got any sense? The girl's an idiot. Everybody knows it, even her own mother. Look, we'll be doing Faigele a favor if we get her committed. That's a fact. Sure, if she stays around here, one of these days she'll fall off the fire escape and crack her head. I'm telling you, it's better off for everybody if Faigele goes. Mrs. Geller can't rent out a room with her around. The whole second floor is empty except for me and my wife and the kid. Everybody moved out." He took out the petition again and extended it to me, coaxingly. "Come on, sign it. Be a sport."

"No," I said, flatly.

His eyebrows began to knit convulsively, and for a minute I though he was going to pounce on me and tear me apart. But then he waved the petition at me and said, "Who needs you, you dopey jerk! We'll get her committed without your help. And lemme tell you, you're the next one to go." He stormed out of the room, his enormous back twitching furiously.

I stood in front of the mirror and congratulated myself. "Manny," I said, gloating at my image, "hello. You finally turned out to be a *mensch*. You stood up to King Kong and you beat him yet." I was too overjoyed to do any work. I sat back on my bed with my hands clasped absently behind my neck and started to dream. Manny, Faigele's protector, that's me.

Two DAYS passed. I had already written three letters to Phil, but I hadn't received any answer yet. It was Tuesday, so I went downstairs and called my mother. I asked her if I had received my draft notification or any letters from Phil. She said no both times, and then she started screaming over the phone. I tried to calm her down. "Ma," I said, "stop worrying. I'm still alive. I'll call you every day if you want. Ma . . . so send ten detectives after me, who cares! They'll never find me, anyway. Ah, it's no use talking to you," I said and I hung up. I felt a little ashamed. "Manny," I said to myself, "after all, she worries about you," and I was going to call her up again, but then I figured what the hell, it's only going to be the same thing all over again. Three words, that's all she knows: "Manny, come home!"

I met Mrs. Geller in the hall, and I told her about King Kong's petition. "Sonny," she said, looking a little worried, "you didn't sign it, no?"

"Mrs. Geller, what kind of a guy do you think I am? Sure I didn't sign." And when I told her that, she grabbed me around and started hugging me and kissing me, right in the hall. Finally I made her let me go, and I went upstairs. "Sonny," she called up to me, "now they'll never be able to take Faigele away. I have you for an ally!"

I figured I'd continue working on the self portrait I'd started, so I posed myself in front of the mirror again. I heard something drop down with a plop on my fire escape. "Not again," I said, and I was ready to tear out my hair. "Faigele, Faigele, lemme have some peace." I figured she was dropping down some more booty from the roof, and I looked around frantically for a paper bag. What's it going to be this time, a turnip, a carrot, another dozen eggs, or maybe something extra special? I'm telling you, if King Kong had come back right then with his petition, I would have signed it on the spot. That's how fed up I was. Well, I walked over to the window ready to scoop up any turnips or eggs or whatever it was, and then I saw that half my fire escape was covered with tremendous lumps of horse manure. I knew right away that this wasn't Faigele's doing. I mean, there's a difference between sending somebody a rotten pigeon egg and a lump of *drek*! I looked up and saw Hymie's impish face peering over the ledge of the roof. And now I knew what the story was. King Kong was trying to put the pressure on

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me. I stuck my head out of the window, and shaking my fist at Hymie, I said, "You can tell your father that I'll never sign his lousy petition, no matter what!" And then I realized how vulnerable I was with my head sticking out like that, so I pulled my head back inside the window. And my timing was perfect, because a lump of horse manure dropped down right where my head had been. I closed the window quickly and was ready to charge up to the roof, but then I saw Faigele dash past my window, and about half a minute later I heard Hymie cry, "Help, help!" I started cheering like a maniac. "Hurray, hurray, Faigele's fighting back!" I became a little frightened. Suppose she throws him off the roof or something? After all, it's partly my fault. I protected her before, so now she was protecting me. And I went right up to the roof. Faigele was already gone, but I saw Hymie's legs dangling out of an orange crate that was half filled with horse manure. I laughed so hard that I had to sit down for a minute to catch my breath. "Help, help!" Hymie cried, and finally he managed to climb out of the crate.

"She made you eat your own ammunition, huh Hymie?"

Hymie's little can drooped dejectedly, and he walked over to the next roof without cursing me or saying a word.

I BOLTED MY door and put the chest next to it for a barricade, and waited for King Kong to show up. I figured he'd be angry as hell, and I wasn't going to take any chances. I spent half the day sitting on top of the chest, listening, like some kind of an insane spy, for footfalls outside my room. After a while my chin dropped down on my chest and I started to dream. Faigele and I were playing on the roof, pretending to be birds. She kept flapping her arms, and then, all of a sudden she just took off and started to fly. She flew rapturously over the roof, and I cupped my hands over my mouth and called after her. "Faigele, Faigele, come down. People can't fly. Come down, before you fall." But she kept flying higher and higher. And I had to find some way to make her come back, so I started pumping my arms like mad, and believe it or not, here I was, flying too. Nobody knows how wonderful it is to be able to fly. If people could fly, I don't think they'd ever want to do anything else. I can't imagine anyone ever getting tired of flying. My arms moved up and down effortlessly and I followed Faigele halfway across the sky. "Faigele," I said, "wait up," but I could never catch up with her. And then, my arms started feeling a little heavy, and my body began to spin. And no matter how hard I flapped my arms, I couldn't keep myself from falling. But even as I plunged I thought to myself: It's worth it, just to be able to fly for a little while. I heard somebody screaming at me. I looked up, and right away I knew that I had fallen off the chest. Both of my buttocks ached miserably, and I said with a groan, "Some flying machine you turned out to be." I saw the door begin to shake, and now I knew why I had fallen off the chest. King Kong was outside my room, banging away at the door, and the whole room was beginning to fall apart. The chest was rocking back and forth as if it were possessed, the pipe beneath the sink was beginning to moan, and the ceiling looked as if it were ready to crack. Plaster chips were falling everywhere and there was no place to hide. I thought for a minute King Kong was going to knock down the door, but then I quieted the chest and leaned against it with all my might. "Lemme in," King Kong said, "lemme in. You saw what she did to my kid, the idiot. And you're the one who's responsible for everything. I'll give you three to come out. One. Two. Three." He started ramming the door with his shoulder, and a tremendous chunk of plaster fell down from the ceiling and almost knocked me down. But I still didn't give in. And for the first time in a long time I didn't feel guilty about not being

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in the army. The hell with the Germans, I had a private war of my own.

"I'm telling you," King Kong said, "you better sign the petition if you wanna live to see tomorrow . . . all right, if you're too afraid to come out, here, I'll push the petition under the door. Sign it, and then I'll go away." When the petition came through the door, I picked it up deliriously, and tore it into at least a hundred pieces. With a demonic grin I sent the petition back piece by piece through the door. I heard King Kong begin to groan. And he charged at the door again. "Thank God," I said to myself, "that they build these old houses with strong doors." I heard King Kong drop down on his knees outside the door. He must've been trying to assemble all the pieces of the petition. I think he was crying. I heard him get up again. "Now you're gonna stay inside of that room for the rest of your life. Because if you ever try to come out, I'm gonna tear you apart. Nobody's gonna save you now. I'll be waiting for you." And then he walked down to the next floor. Out of spite I wanted to open up the door and shout something down to him, but I was too petrified even to go near the door. "Okay, King Kong," I said to myself, "I'll wait out your siege, you'll see."

LUCKILY I HAD stored seven cans of tuna fish in the bottom drawer of the chest, or probably I would have starved to death. Three days passed. I tried to send signals down to Mrs. Geller, but Faigele didn't come near my window, not even once. I was going to ask King Kong for some kind of a truce, but I knew it wouldn't work. I was down to my last two cans of tuna fish. And then, during the afternoon of the fourth day of the siege I heard a knock on the door. Somebody called, "Manny, open up," and it wasn't King Kong. "Phil?" I said, pressing my ear against the door, "is that you?"

"Who the hell do you think it is? Come on, open up."

I hesitated, of course, but then I figured that even if King Kong was a ventriloquist, how would he know what Phil's voice sounded like? So with trembling hands I opened up the door. Phil was wearing a dirty T-shirt, and he looked as if he hadn't slept for a week. I hugged him anyway, that's how glad I was to see him. I was going to tell him about Faigele and the siege and everything, but he waved me off and said, "Please, Manny, lemme rest up for a minute. I haven't been off my feet for days." Letting him use my shoulder for a crutch, I led him toward the bed. He took off his shoes and put them on the window sill. The heels and soles of his shoes were worn through, and his feet were absolutely black. He wanted to fall asleep right away, but I wouldn't let him.

"Phil," I said, "what happened? Why'd you come back from New Orleans?" He rubbed his feet and kept quiet.

"So?" I said, thinking about the women with melon-shaped breasts and honeyed lips, and I waited eagerly for Phil to tell me about his adventures. But all he did was look sourly at me and rub his belly. "I'm hungry," he said. "If you won't lemme sleep, then at least gimme something to eat." So I gave Phil my last can of tuna fish. Poor guy, he must have been hungry as hell, because he gobbled up the whole can in less than a minute. After he licked the oil off his fingers he looked at me for a minute with his baggy eyes, and then he turned his head away. I knew now it wasn't any fantastic stories that I was going to hear.

"Manny," he said, looking woodenly at the wall, "the first day I got to New Orleans this guy and a girl caught me in back of a bar and stole my wallet and my watch. The girl wanted to take my pants and my shirt, and I hadda beg the guy to lemme keep 'em. I had to sleep out in the street for two nights and I was even arrested for being a vagrant. Don't ask! Manny, even the army couldn't be any worse than that."

"Phil," I said, "what about those letters you wrote me?"

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"Ah," he said, "all lies. I thought maybe you'd come out there if I wrote you all that. It was terrible being by myself, Manny. And after a while I started believing all the crap I wrote, and I felt a whole lot better. You know. I didn't meet anybody out there. No women, nothin'."

Then I started thinking to myself. If Phil hadn't sent those damn letters I would still be home, instead of sweating it out here with Faigele on one side and King Kong on the other. And I couldn't help it, but I felt like strangling him.

"Hey Manny," Phil said, stretching his arms lazily, "wake me up after it gets dark, huh?"

And that's when I grabbed him by the ankles and threw him off the bed.

"Get out."

"What?" he said, bewildered. And then he started to laugh. "Quit it, Manny. I'm tired. Later, huh? Then we'll play games."

"Get out!"

He looked at me unbelievingly with his baggy eyes and quickly put on his shoes. "You a nut, huh Manny? First you hug me and now you wanna throw me out. All I wanted to do was stay here for one—"

I pushed him out of the room and bolted the door.

"Manny," he said, standing outside, "you turned into a madman, I mean it. Lemme in. I don't wanna go home. Manny?"

He asked me one more time before he left. I stood near the door for a minute and then I began to panic. I didn't want to stay by myself any more. "I'm sorry," I said, and I opened up the door. "Phil," I called out, but no one answered. I wanted to run down after him, but I was too afraid to leave my room. I figured that with King Kong in the house I would never get past the second floor. So I bolted the door again and sat down on the floor, and believe it or not, I started to cry. "Manny," I said to myself, "you're the king of the shmoes!" An artist I wanted to be yet!

And then, almost miraculously, I saw Faigele's face in the window. At first I thought it was only a vision, but when she started to moo, I knew that it was Faigele in the flesh! "Faigele," I said, "wait, don't go away!" but she climbed up to the roof. "I'll show them," I said, and gathering up a brush, a large piece of cardboard, and some random tubes of paint, I opened the window and climbed out on the fire escape. I looked around to see if Hymie was spying on me or anything, and then I tiptoed up to the roof, gripping the metal banister tightly after every step. I looked down once and right away I became dizzy and almost dropped a tube of paint. Faigele was playing behind a clothesline, so I walked over to her quietly, sat down on the lumpy tar floor, and placed the piece of cardboard against my knees. I watched her play for about ten minutes, and then I took out my crayon. A pigeon landed on the roof and Faigele started to imitate the way it walked. The pigeon limped for a minute, and Faigele started limping too. She smiled at the pigeon, and I stared at her dumbly for a moment, because it wasn't the smile of an idiot girl, no. Her whole face glowed and her smile was so gentle and warm that even the pigeon was baffled and stood motionless for a moment. God, I thought to myself, if only I could paint the way she smiled, I'd be some kind of a genius. She reached out her hand to touch the pigeon, but then she started to moo, and right away her features coarsened and her smile lost all of its enchantment. She was Faigele the Idiotke again, and the pigeon flapped its wings wildly and retreated to the other end of the roof. Faigele flapped her arms too and ran after the pigeon. "Faigele, Faigele," I cried, "come back." I saw Hymie and a few of the Maccabees standing behind me and I knew King Kong would be up in a minute. I stood up, dropped the tubes of paint and the cardboard, and galloped after Faigele with a prolonged groan. The pigeon stood on the

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ledge of the roof. Faigele approached the ledge, flapping her arms and mooing. Hymie and the Maccabees started to shout. "Fly, Faigele, fly." The pigeon remained on the ledge for another moment and then flew off triumphantly. "Fly, Faigele, fly!" Faigele stood on the ledge and watched the pigeon longingly, and I could see now she was crying. "Fly, Faigele, fly." She looked at me once, and then flapping her arms rhythmically, she jumped off the roof. I leaned over the ledge and tried to grab one of her legs, but it was too late. Her arms flapped once or twice as her body plunged, and for a minute I thought she really was going to fly, and then her body struck the ground with a heavy thud and she lay motionless out in the yard. Mrs. Geller's cats appeared suddenly, ran over to Faigele, and started licking her body. Hymie and the Maccabees ran downstairs and I remained alone up on the roof. I heard the cats begin to howl.

Even King Kong cried later when he saw Faigele out in the yard. Mrs. Geller kept beating her chest and her patch dropped all the way down and exposed the gutted socket of her eye. "I should have sent her away," she sobbed brokenly, and King Kong put his arm around her and comforted her. The two cats kept howling. I signed seven different forms, and I told the story over and over again, and finally the police left. I went up to my room and started packing. I found the pigeon egg and the carrot that I had left in the bottom drawer of the chest, and I dropped them gently into the duffel bag. And then I said goodbye to the room and went downstairs.

I spent half the night wandering through the streets, with my back bent over from the weight of the duffel bag. I kept mumbling to myself. "Let Phil be a birdman if he wants, I'm staying on the ground. I don't want to fly. Faigele, Faigele . . . I should have signed the petition." A taxicab almost ran me over and twice I was stopped by a policeman. A drunken sailor offered to buy me a beer, and when I walked past him without saying a word, he kicked me in the butt and I tumbled over and fell in the gutter. The sailor picked me up and told me ten times how sorry he was, and he made me keep his sailor hat. I peed in the middle of the street and was almost arrested, but luckily I was wearing the sailor hat and the policeman let me go. "Save it for Germany," he said with a wink. Finally I settled outside a recruiting station and sat quietly on my duffel bag. I glanced at all the recruiting posters. Uncle Sam pointed his bony finger at me and I must have been going out of my mind, because I heard him say, "Faigele, Faigele, Faigele," over and over again. I buried my head in the folds of the duffel bag and cried bitterly for a little while.

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*MURRAY KEMPTON*

# EPISTLES FROM THE EISENHOWER AGE

THE EISENHOWER administration on the whole was not a bad administration so far as its policies and achievements were concerned: very little that was undertaken by the government of the United States might have been better—or even different—had we in 1952 placed our destinies in anyone else's hands. What would have been different was the *tone* of those eight years, the style of public demeanor and public rhetoric that was created to some extent by the President himself, but to an even greater extent by the men around him. The disappearance of this tone is the most notable—and perhaps the only significant—change that has taken place since the Eisenhower Age ended.

The memoirs of five participants in the Eisenhower government have so far been published,* and it is already clear that the tone in question derived from the peculiar pietism of Eisenhower's inner circle. Each of his servants not only had a supremely confident sense of his own divine election to lead a divinely elected America in its struggle against the godless forces of Communism, but each seems also to have treated the President as his religious background had trained him to treat God.

Sherman Adams tells us, for example, that John Foster Dulles had said to the President-elect: "With my understanding of the intricate relationships between the peoples of the world and your sensitiveness to the political considerations involved, we will make the most successful team in history." We could hardly find a neater summary of a certain sort of orthodox Presbyterian's attitude toward his God.

Emmet Hughes was the youngest man at Cabinet meetings; yet he was with Protestants and knew himself, as a Catholic, automatically their elder. We have only a fragment of what promises to be the most intriguing memoir of them all, but the outline of Hughes's Eisenhower is plain. He is the Deity both lazy and vigorous, comfortable at a distance, terrible up close, dissolving into mystery with contact: the Deity, in other words, of Graham Greene, in whose country, as someone once said, God's in His heaven and all's wrong with the world.

Then there is Sherman Adams's attitude toward the President. One afternoon Adams was talking by telephone to the Secretary of Defense when the buzzer

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* The memoirs from which this estimate is rather freely abstracted are: Robert K. Gray, *Eighteen Acres Under Glass* (Doubleday, 348 pp., $4.95); Ezra Taft Benson, *Cross Fire* (Doubleday, 627 pp., $6.95); Sherman Adams, *First Hand Report* (Harper & Row, 481 pp., $6.50); Lewis L. Strauss, *Men and Decisions* (Doubleday, 480 pp., $6.95); and Richard Goold-Adams, *John Foster Dulles—A Reappraisal* (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 309 pp., $5.50). Emmet J. Hughes has published excerpts from his *Eisenhower, A Political Memoir* (Atheneum, 384 pp., $5.95) under the title "The Eisenhower I Knew" in *Look* (December 4, 1962).



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sounded its call to the President's office. Adams hung up the phone, gathered his papers, and started out of the office. The President buzzed again. Said Adams to Gray, secretary to the Cabinet: "What does he think I am, a God-damned gazelle?" A lifetime of New Hampshire winters does not condition a man to be patient with the Heavenly Powers.

Lewis Strauss's favorite verse is one from Leviticus that amounts to an adjuration to the butcher to keep his thumb off the scales. From Micah, Strauss also took the advice to walk humbly in the sight of his Lord, which precaution enabled him to tread arrogantly in the presence of anyone else. He seems to have applied this doctrine to his relations with the President; but then his affronted inferiors got him. It is seldom wise to modernize the wisdom of the ancients by excerpting only what happens to be convenient.

None of these memoirists had responsibilities so awful as Strauss did in chairing the Atomic Energy Commission, and none seems to have met them with less question about the doctrine that guided all of Eisenhower's servants—the idea that the cold war could be exhaustively defined as a struggle between a God-fearing America and a league of godless Communists. Admiral Strauss remembers with pride the letter he wrote in 1949 to President Truman—the only head of state so far to have given an order to use the atom bomb—listing his arguments for developing the hydrogen bomb. His third argument, entire, is: "A government of atheists is not likely to be dissuaded from producing the weapon on 'moral' grounds."

Our concern here is with faith and not works, and this is not the place to argue whether Strauss was right or wrong about the hydrogen bomb. He himself admits of no doubt on the subject; his role in its development is the proudest page in four hundred and eighty without a single modest disclaimer. What does strike the observer, however, is how bold Strauss could be in the large and how timid in the small. He was convinced, as an instance, that British security was so casual that it would be dangerous to share our atomic secrets with the British; he seems to have felt that it was an extraordinary demonstration of dubiously deserved faith when we offered them our findings on the "effects of radiation resulting from atomic explosion." Strauss had that obsession with security which marks a man terrified of small mistakes. He was reckless only about mega-dangers.

This caution about minor risks and complacency about infinite perils seems to have been a characteristic consequence of belief in the Eisenhower doctrine. Why indeed not? It is an article of folk wisdom so ancient as almost to be discredited that, once a man is assured of his moral perfection, no sin is beyond him. The figure of Dulles offers incredible support for this prejudice. He was a brave man laboring selflessly for his God; yet he was distrusted by every ally who dealt with him and with good reason in every case but that of Adenauer, whose nature distrusts everything. Richard Goold-Adams effectively persuades us that Dulles's duplicity was as much to blame for Suez as Eden's intemperance. From the belief that any outbreak of violence in the Middle East would endanger the President's chances of re-election, he lied, paltered, and procrastinated. The French and British endured Dulles's evasions to the point of conviction that he would not support even limited action against Nasser; he was so hostile to sensible measures that by the time they had turned to senseless ones, they had cut off all communication with the American State Department. Yet when—after Eden's collapse and the British evacuation of Suez—British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd came to Washington and visited the Secretary of State in the hospital, Dulles's first question was: "I thought you did the wrong thing at Suez; but once you had done it why didn't you finish the job?"

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Eventually the situation was settled—"somehow" is Adams's adverb and defines how helpless they had all felt until it was. The French and British withdrew their forces; Dulles, hospitalized during the heat of the crisis, returned, heroic if not always gallant. There remained the Israelis, who clung to the Gaza Strip refusing to leave for want of trust in Dulles's assurances of his good offices with the Arabs. The Israelis were brought to surrender in the end because Dulles made it plain that the United States would join the UN in voting economic sanctions against them. The President announced his support of sanctions against Israel in a television address composed by Dulles, of which one paragraph so neatly summarizes the doctrine that only the President could have inserted it.

"Eisenhower," says Adams,

> did not avoid the "double-standard argument" which pointed to the United Nations' failure to punish Russia for its invasion of Hungary but he disapproved of the comparison: "There can, of course, be no equating of a nation like Israel with that of the Soviet Union. The people of Israel, like those of the United States, are imbued with a religious faith and a sense of moral values. We are entitled to expect and do expect from such peoples of the free world a contribution to world order which unhappily we cannot expect from a nation controlled by atheistic despots."

By the rules of this epistle, moral pressure is to be applied only to those atheistic despots with whom, by definition, it is useless. Statesmen who share the covenant are to be set right by direct material pressure: Israel needed help from the Export-Import Bank and it was made clear that she could not hope for any while her troops were in Gaza.

THE ASSURANCE of moral worth by election is accompanied by a recurring need to discover high-minded reasons for sensible and hardly blameworthy actions. Strauss, for example, began his public career as an unpaid assistant to Herbert Hoover in the European Relief program. At the end of the war, Mortimer Schiff offered him a place in Kuhn Loeb. Young Strauss accepted after talking with Oscar Strauss, Theodore Roosevelt's Secretary of Commerce, who explained that "banking could be a constructive profession, that it was very well-rewarded, and the means it provided enabled those who succeeded at it to engage in good works." Then Strauss was offered a $10,000-a-year place as Comptroller of the League of Nations. "The offer from the League of Nations presented a dilemma. There was no doubt that Mr. Schiff would scarcely hold me to the undertaking, but I felt bound in *honor*." Any young man with a sense of his future was justified in going to Kuhn Loeb; but only Strauss had a compulsion to assert that, having accepted a wealthy banker's offer to make a poor young man rich, he had bound himself in honor.

Another example of the same habit of mind can be found in Ezra Benson's memoirs. Early in 1960, the Secretary of Agriculture had the unexpected experience of being tumultuously received by the Young Republicans in Washington and by the American Dental Association in Chicago. Could this be the groundswell? He talked to his son Reed, who urged him to run for president. The Secretary and Reed (who has since gone into missionary work for the John Birch Society) flew to Salt Lake City to seek the spiritual guidance of David O. McKay, the Mormon prophet. Ezra Benson explained that, although "I had no aspirations whatever for political office," there was this evidence of a call, "usually by word of mouth.

"Following these preliminary remarks, Reed made an excellent presentation of the entire issue." McKay, "the venerable, gray-haired eighty-eight-year-old prophet, listened intently. Then, speaking in his quiet forceful manner, he appraised some of the political developments and current national leaders. . . . Finally he suggested that we watch this developing ground-

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swell closely for the next few weeks and that, if we did, we should have the answer by the time of our Church conference in April." Plainly when the aspiration stirs for higher service, there is comfort in spiritual counsel as practical as any state chairman's.

ADHERENCE to the Eisenhower doctrine further served to refine the believer's assurance of his motives to that state where he can no longer understand them. Strauss and Benson show themselves to be the most highly developed specimens of this process.

Strauss, of course, had sat as judge in the matter of Robert Oppenheimer. His memoir has a chapter on this unhappy instance of our national ingratitude, as it has a chapter on his own bad treatment by the Senate when he was rejected as the President's nominee for Secretary of Commerce. He feels that he was convicted by innuendo, rumor, prejudice, and personal spite—and this may well be true; he in fact persuades us that the record of his trial was very like the one which his appointee, Roger Robb, wrote in the Oppenheimer case. This comparison does not occur to Strauss, but certain unexpected cautions do. For example, in a memoir cluttered with documents over his signature, Strauss leaves out entirely the opinion which rejected Oppenheimer's appeal from the recommendation that his security clearance be withdrawn. Strauss does not even tell us that he had any part in that decision or any opinion except that of a detached observer. He merely reports that a majority of the AEC was persuaded that Oppenheimer's continued employment was " 'not clearly consistent with the interests of national security'. . . . I believed so then and do so as this is written."

Strauss's employment of quotation marks in this instance is rather a puzzle because the phrase quoted nowhere appears in the AEC opinion which finally denied Oppenheimer's clearance and upon which the signature of Lewis L. Strauss leads all the rest. That document speaks in a tone of pride at the refusal to evade delicacies about clear consistency with the national interest; it pronounces flat, harsh judgments about "falsehoods, evasions, and misrepresentations," and "fundamental defects of 'character' " and "failure to measure up to exemplary standards of reliability, self-discipline, and trustworthiness."

Now, Strauss is also a trustee of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. He tells us that he had offered Oppenheimer the position as director of the Institute which he held at the time his security clearance was withdrawn and which he continues to hold today. Strauss explains that the mere finding that Oppenheimer was a security risk to the Atomic Energy Commission "did not mean that I considered him unfit to continue as director of the Institute for Advanced Study. His intellectual attainments were his qualifications for that post. I not only voted for his re-election as director of the Institute after the hearings and the decision, *but offered the motion myself.*"

To read that paragraph is to understand the service of whatever guardian angel instructed Strauss to leave out the text of what he had actually said about Oppenheimer in his final AEC decision. He would otherwise have to explain just why he conceived it his duty as the trustee of an institution not merely to vote for its highest executive, who had a record of "falsehood, evasion and misrepresentation," but to make the motion for his re-election. The proper explanation is simple. Strauss's part in the Oppenheimer case had affronted the very scientists of whose friendship he boasts in his memoirs. It had disturbed and in a few cases also frustrated his brother trustees at the Institute. He could not further punish Oppenheimer. A man of conscience might at least have kept silent as an expression of faith in the moral judgment he had rendered. Instead Strauss made the motion to keep Oppenheimer, and he is proud of

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having done so. He is proud of everything he has ever done.

As for Benson, in 1955 he refused to hire Wolf Ladejinsky as an agricultural attaché because he was a security risk. Ladejinsky had powerful friends; there was a dustup; at one point, Benson says, "my new executive assistant" called a press conference to announce new evidence against Ladejinsky just offered by a "former officer of the Russian Czar." The new evidence turned out to be that Ladejinsky was Jewish. Benson defines this action of his subordinate as "an error of judgment due to inexperience."

In 1959, he was embarrassed once more, this time by the cranberry scare. The Food and Drug Administration had warned that the year's Thanksgiving cranberry crop had been treated with an additive since found to have caused cancer in rats. Secretary Benson remembers this warning about cancer as a suspicion of "questionable wholesomeness."

The cancer scare proved, of course, to be fantasy; but usually the genteelism of the Eisenhower litany was required for the softening of reality. In either case, the point was how things looked: "When Little Rock came into the news as the scene of a disturbance over plans to desegregate the schools," Adams could not help recalling "Eisenhower's appearance in that capital city of Arkansas on September 3, 1952, during his first Presidential campaign. The arrangements had been made with the usual precautions that we followed in the South, with the rally being staged outdoors so the segregation question would not *mess things up*."

There seems to be a kind of New England faith that God does not know what He is not explicitly told about. Adams brought this doctrine to President Eisenhower's service with such fidelity that, Gray complains, "Adams spared the President from people and papers that could have made possible earlier action in such important developments as the 1957–58 recession and in preparing for the propaganda and psychological aspects of the first sputnik." Adams had learned in youth what a terrible temper God had, and President Eisenhower fulfilled that image.

ADAMS went out at the end as a victim of his own rule that what counts is how things look. His friendship with Bernard Goldfine, the cause of his fall, was, he says, a complex of "mistakes of judgment, not of intent. . . . In answer to one question, I said that I might have acted with a little more prudence. The observation was not by any means a slip of the tongue. I said it deliberately; I had been imprudent and I was ready to admit it."

Adams, for one, never pronounced a moral judgment and he does not deserve one now. No moral consideration entered into his expulsion from the temple. When, in September, 1958, he returned from a fishing trip,

> . . . the President was away from the White House at his vacation quarters in Newport. He had been told by [National Chairman] Meade Alcorn that some of the largest contributors to the Republican campaign fund in past years were reluctant to support the party . . . unless I resigned. Disturbed by this report, Eisenhower asked Nixon and me to talk with him about it. But the President did not ask me to resign and neither did Alcorn or the Vice President. The decision was left to me.

Adams could be trusted to understand how it could be made to look.

The adjuration to purify the raiment was the central tenet of the Eisenhower gospel, and the largest part of what it has left behind. Richard Nixon, as inheritor of the ashes, was the embodiment of this tenet. Five of his six crises involve nothing more than decisions on the proper way to behave in public.

Ezra Benson says he learned very young "the importance of avoiding even the appearance of evil." He had been unjustly accused of cheating in high school. "Though I was innocent, circumstances

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made me look guilty. Since this could so easily be true in many of life's situations, I made a resolution to keep even the appearance of my actions above question, so far as possible."

This rule of conduct has never commended itself to the older theologies for the sound reason that once everyone in the congregation accepts it, somebody in the congregation is certain to become its victim.

Gray picks from his memory a glowing example of Vice President Nixon's dexterity at the manipulation of how things look. Nixon had come to the 1960 Republican convention assured that his chances depended on avoiding even the appearance of association with Secretary of Agriculture Benson. But then Benson showed up to greet President Eisenhower upon his arrival at the convention:

> Secretaries Summerfield, Seaton, Rogers, Fleming, and Mueller gallantly passed Mrs. Benson to the head of the receiving line and her husband followed with her. At the last moment the Vice President and Mrs. Nixon emerged from the hotel to find the valued moment of endorsement by the popular Eisenhower about to be soured by the fact that they would be sharing the limelight with the politically leprous Benson.
>
> The Vice President, whose mental agility in similar situations had aided his other abilities in meteoric political ascent, turned to me and asked, "Bob, are we in protocol order?" This is the order in which cabinet officers are ranked, primarily for social purposes, according to the date of creation of their departments. I replied that it would only take a moment. That put Rogers, Summerfield and Seaton ahead of the Bensons and moved them out of camera range.

The succession had been solemnized by ritual sacrifice. But of course, there was no succession; and, with that understanding which makes the gods superior to their servants, President Eisenhower seems always to have doubted that there would be. "The fact is, of course," he told Hughes, "I've watched Dick a long time and he just hasn't grown. So I just honestly haven't been able to believe that he *is* Presidential timber."

Some of this unease reflected that public temper of which the President was always so precise a mirror. But some of it came from his prejudice against men whose whole life had been politics: "The President," Hughes tells us, "felt deeply the exceptional respect the military always reserves for triumph in the business world; such triumph always seemed the ultimate in civilian achievement, certainly surpassing the value of mere 'political' attainment or distinction."

There remained the hope that Providence, in the President's person, might dispose of Nixon. But Providence, as the oldest church knows, does not intervene. Nothing describes Mr. Eisenhower's special quality as a President like his acceptance of an heir designated for him by others.

Still, in the last weeks of October, he fought for the succession with some passion, and he almost saved it. That he came so close with an instrument of which he and so many, many Americans thought so poorly proves how strong the doctrine still was in American life and how comfortably the President, with his good will in general and indifference in the particular, represented the dominant national faith.

EISENHOWER'S own sense of divine election, while under more decent restraint than that of his ordinates, does peek through in his repeated reminders to the members of his Cabinet that they were the wisest men in America. His Cabinet, of course, represented the resolution of pulls and tugs of conflicting political calculations, which, being the result of human endeavor, can deliver you Arthur Summerfield in one package and Earl Warren in the next. The President could only think that such a process had brought him the wisest men in America if he believed that the Holy Ghost had intervened in its operations. He must, in this instance anyway, have believed that America was un-

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der divine protection, in Benson's Mormon phrase, "the chosen land."

This conviction of America's divine election was the rock from which all public pronouncements of the Eisenhower doctrine were issued. It set the tone of those years. Now, most blasphemy is embarrassing and tedious, but the piety that opens all discourse by affirming the glory and wisdom of God on no better evidence than His choice of you as His vessel, is the most tedious and embarrassing blasphemy of all. Everything that follows such an affirmation has to be empty; it leaves no room for speculation or apology or even any persuasion except, as in poor Dulles's case, the occasional display of that holy relic, proof of our election, which God had given us at Los Alamos. The President's theology seems never to have risen above the conception that there was a Man Upstairs Who was a good American and looked rather like Robert E. Lee. He had come very close with that image to the religiosity of a period when no one could ask questions because the question period was used up by the oath of allegiance.

Eisenhower's belief in the simple existence of the godly and the godless fits perfectly the America he came home to rule. Americans could name and feel proud of these differences from the Soviet Union: (1) we were of the godly; (2) next in importance, we believed in free enterprise; (3) of minor but useful importance, our government does not expect children to turn in their parents for counter-revolutionary activities.

But if Eisenhower's sense of duty and ceremony compelled him to this deplorable public tone, he nevertheless had the habit of command and he had discretion, and his private tone could be far better. Sherman Adams remembers Eisenhower's explaining to the cabinet the danger of the Bricker Amendment to give Congress treaty-making power: "Can man govern himself?" he asked suddenly. "It's just that simple. Can man operate by co-operation? We have got to get our struggle understood by the whole world, for this is the struggle of man to rule himself. We talk about France and her political troubles and then we see our own people want to pass a Bricker Amendment. Then we see that we rule by prejudices, by shibboleths and by slogans. Well, we better get going to something else before I get worked up."

Here we glimpse, even if for just a moment, an Eisenhower who understood the one thing that had never occurred to the rest of them: there is a dog beneath every man's skin, even a Cabinet officer's. It seems a pity that theology interested such a man so much less than it did most of the others; he was far better equipped than they to use it. And so there was no one with the proper authority to instruct them in the fact of original sin.

THE FAITH we have been assessing died at its center the morning after the 1960 election. Gray found the president with his back to his desk, looking at his hands.

"I have," he said, "never felt so old as I do today."

After the cabinet meeting, Mr. Eisenhower was observed "walking across the lawn toward the car which would take him to his airplane and a brief vacation in Augusta, Georgia. His usually erect carriage was noticeably stooped, and his walk was so slow it was almost a drag." One of the cabinet assistants asked of three others who had joined him at the French doors to watch the Chief Executive's departure, "How old is the President, now?" "Only seventy," said another. "Could you believe it?" The history of this religion had run just eight years, and its embodiment was looking down from a deserted heaven, into an empty bubbletop car and on a dead faith.

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# NEW LEFT MARXISM

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LONDON

SOME TIME AGO a speaker on the BBC expressed the hope that Jean-Paul Sartre would in future devote more of his time to drama and less to philosophy. Similar observations are made occasionally in France by people whose political commitments do not differ much from those of Sartre, but who are skeptical of his claim to have effected a synthesis of Marxism and Existentialism. Sartre is, of course, a public figure as well as a philosopher, and his utterances commonly receive the kind of attention reserved in Britain for the pronouncements of Lord Russell. When he declares that Marxism is the last of the great philosophies and the central intellectual concern of our age, the statement is not shrugged off as an eccentricity, as it would be were it made by a prominent American or British writer, supposing such an unlikely thing to occur. These background differences cannot be gone into here. One simply registers the fact that a work such as Sartre's *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*—seven hundred fifty closely printed pages of Marxist, or pseudo-Marxist, dialectics published in 1961—could not have been produced anywhere but in France. Not because the subject is of purely local concern, but because Sartre's way of dealing with it presupposes a certain intellectual tradition. In a way this is an old story—as old perhaps as the difference between Descartes and Hobbes—but the point is that the cleavage persists even in the case of writers concerned with a contemporary phenomenon such as Marxism.

To stay a moment longer with the current situation in France: a paper like *Le Monde*—a daily after all, not a literary weekly—allots considerable space to review-articles on neo-Marxist literature, and this literature in turn is closely related to the concerns of educated people, whatever their political preferences. It deals with matters that affect everyone: modern civilization, technology, the arts, education, and so on. The nearest equivalent in Britain are the sociological studies associated with Mr. Raymond Williams and his friends of the New Left circle. There is in fact a fairly precise parallel between the British New Left and its Parisian counterpart who appear in a monthly review *Arguments*. But again one has the impression that the French group has a wider public and finds a more resonant echo among what it is now proper to call the intelligentsia. This cannot be due to the size of the French Communist party, for the writers in question are mainly ex-Communists and in some cases ex-Marxists as well. Rather it seems to reflect a habit of theorizing about social and cultural phenomena at a level of generality which in Britain is commonly reserved for technical philosophy. Writers like Henri Lefebvre—for many years a prominent Communist until he broke with the party on political *and* theoretical grounds—are indeed philosophers in the technical sense, but they do not confine themselves to academic work, and their writings reach a public that does not ordinarily go in for logical subtleties.

I mentioned Lefebvre just now. He is less well-known than Sartre, but may become a greater influence on the non-Communist Left in France, not least because for years he was an orthodox Marxist-Leninist: something Sartre has never been. His break with the party was an aspect of that internal crisis which in recent years has driven thousands of intellectuals out of its ranks and created a new mental climate. Although the root cause is political, this weakening of the Communist party's hold over the intellectuals in France takes the form of a debate in which its critics make use of Marxist concepts to show up the inadequacy of the standard Communist approach. Lefebvre



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for example, in his recently published *Introduction à la Modernité,* concerns himself with ordinary contemporary reality as it affects the individual living in a modern industrial country. He thus to some extent blots out the distinction between capitalism and socialism: a grave sin from the Communist viewpoint. To talk about the impact of mass communications, or about the position of women in a society which no longer regards thirty as a mature age, must appear frivolous to the party stalwarts for whom such phenomena hardly exist. Outside France, where this kind of literature has been proliferating for some years, it may seem less of an intellectual innovation for a theorist to discover that modern society has certain problems simply because it *is* modern, i.e., highly industrialized. The lag may be due to the fact that the French are only now beginning to realize to what an extent their country has in recent years undergone a material and technical transformation. What used to be called Americanism (before people had discovered that it was simply modernism) has finally broken through the crust of the old bourgeois way of life, with the result that all of a sudden everyone is talking about the same things: technology, specialization, loneliness, and the role of the individual in a mass society. To that extent the literature of the New Left is simply a way of adapting Marxist sociology to modern life.

THERE ARE, however, philosophical issues which differentiate the French movement sharply from its counterparts in the United States, where liberalism remains the official philosophy, or even in Britain with its indigenous socialist tradition. The difference in some cases perhaps amounts to little more than a habit of quoting Hegel and Marx instead of Jefferson or William Morris, but it makes for a different manner of theorizing and verbalizing about trends that everyone is aware of. When Lefebvre complains that the Communists have transformed "the romanticism of the revolution" into a "moralizing neo-classicism," he is perhaps saying no more than has been said in Britain by a New Left writer like Alasdair MacIntyre. But he says it against the background of a national tradition within which the term "revolution" has far greater resonance than it possesses in Britain. Again, when he plays off the young Marx against the Communist movement, and affirms his unshakable commitment to Marx's concept of "the whole man," he is saying something that followers of William Morris, and admirers of D. H. Lawrence, can appreciate even if they have not read the *Paris Manuscripts of 1844* or the *German Ideology*; but the echo it evokes has a different sound because in France it is not a mark of eccentricity to affirm oneself a socialist in the Marxist tradition. After all, Marx did compose these seminal writings in Paris or Brussels, and one of his more influential early works was actually written and published in French. It took the postwar interest in all things German to acclimate his Hegelian terminology in France, but by now the thing has been done, and even Catholic theologians have begun to fill stout volumes of critical studies with hundreds of pages devoted to the analysis of such concepts as "objectification" and "alienation."

With these evocative terms we have crossed the borderline into philosophy proper, and must now try to navigate among its sandbanks and shallows. This is not made easier by literary fashions that tend to fasten on concepts originally destined for more technical usage. "Alienation" is a case in point. For all one knows there are people who believe it has something to do with mental disturbance, just as there certainly are some enthusiasts who seem to confuse it with Brecht's theories about the stage. The German terms *"Entfremdung"* and *"Verfremdung"* are sufficiently similar to encourage such misconceptions. In California, one gathers, it is now established ground among the more advanced spirits that Marx was a forerunner of both psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism. Setting aside these misapprehensions, what is the real cause of the interest shown in recent years by the New Left movement in the hitherto almost unknown, because untranslated, philosophical writings of the young Marx? For those familiar with them, no explanation is required. They are relevant because they deal with what Malraux called *"la condition humaine."* Incidentally, Malraux in his youthful days was a thoroughgoing romantic, a kind of Trotskyist Saint-Exupéry. But then in those days it was still possible to believe

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that the Russian Revolution would give birth to a new world and transform human nature: more or less what the young Marx looked forward to on the eve of 1848.

Are we then confronted with a revival of romanticism? Yes and no. The political failure of the 1848 movement—and even more its economic success in launching Western and Central Europe on the road of bourgeois development—killed romanticism in France and Germany, and incidentally turned Marx from a philosopher into an economist, and from an apostle of unlimited creative freedom into a kind of determinist. The prosaic outcome of the Russian Revolution may have done something similar for the modern Communist movement. Its official ideology, as Lefebvre quite rightly points out, has become moralistic and authoritarian: not surprisingly since it is now the creed of a ruling class which must try to keep the show going against individual resistance and popular indifference. This is the situation in the USSR and in Eastern Europe, except for some rebellious mutterings in Poland. But in the West, where the Communist party is not in power and may even be losing ground, it cannot easily dispense with the old romantic fervor. The Italian Communists have struck a compromise by placing the official seal upon the libertarian and quasi-romantic philosophy of their party's founder, Antonio Gramsci: a pupil of Croce and a Hegelian Marxist of considerable subtlety. The French have no Gramsci and are stuck with the dreary orthodoxy of Soviet Marxism and its French exponents, whose scholastic narrowness matches the political rigidity of M. Thorez's party. In Britain the situation is similar, and there is a corresponding reaction against Marxist academicism. It is, when all is said and done, an anti-rationalist reaction. The Communists having ridden the rationalist horse to death, the submerged romantic element inescapably present in every revolutionary movement tries to assert itself, and it naturally does so by appealing to the young Marx, who was something of a romantic himself.

If one were to cite the relevant texts this suggestion could easily be made plausible, but space forbids. Nor is it possible here to go into all the recent English-language literature on the subject. Much of it, though by no means all, is in some way connected with the New Left. Amidst a growing body of work, some recent scholarly studies by Mr. Gordon Leff* and Dr. Eugene Kamenka† require mention for their analysis of the theme of moral responsibility in the light of Hegelian and post-Hegelian thinking. These writers do not obtrude their commitments, but neither do they conceal them. Mr. Leff writes as a socialist, but also as an empiricist (although he takes issue with Karl Popper); Dr. Kamenka, a Central European transplanted to Australia, appears to sympathize with the anarchists. At any rate he reproaches Marx with not having been sufficiently radical in rejecting all moral principles hostile to the unfettered freedom of the individual. There is a similar stress on the moral element of choice in the work of Kostas Axelos, a Greek ex-Communist now resident in France and one of the principal figures of the group around *Arguments*. What such writers seem to feel is that the starting point for a reconsideration of Marxism is to be found in the young Marx: which is another way of saying that what concerns them most is the human condition, not the mechanism of social change, let alone the technical problem of making a socialist economy work. They take it for granted that human beings will have unsolved problems even under socialism, and that philosophy must attend to them.

THERE IS here a link with the young Marx, but also a point of departure from him, for Marx in 1844 committed himself to the bold statement that the coming revolution would "realize" the aims of philosophy, in consequence of which philosophy as such would disappear, as would religion (and the state). By "philosophy" he meant Hegel's thought, the only metaphysical system he took seriously. If one holds that metaphysical concerns are linked to mortality and cannot disappear as long as man is a finite being, there is something rather romantic about Marx's expectation, which in any case corresponded only to a fleeting moment in his youthful development. Sartre, at any rate,

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* *The Tyranny of Concepts: A Critique of Marxism.* Ambassador Press (Toronto), 203 pp., $4.25.

† *The Ethical Foundations of Marxism.* Praeger, 208 pp., $6.50.

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does not believe philosophy will come to an end: in the *Critique de la Raison* he suggests on the contrary that once Communism has been established, it is Marxism that will disappear, while a "philosophy of liberty" (possibly not very different from Sartre's own) will take its place. This is a neat way of turning the tables, but not convincing to all of Sartre's critics, who incidentally include Lefebvre. The latter, it may be noted, remains close to the Marx of 1844/45 in asserting that the overcoming of "human alienation" requires the end of religion, philosophy, politics, and art, as specialized and "alienated" activities: the "complete man" lives a life in which these projections of the human spirit are no longer "externalized," but rather "resumed" into his daily existence. *"Pour que la vie devienne art de vivre, l'art doit se perdre et se retrouver dans la vie."* This is more or less what Marx says in the *Manuscripts*. It is also in tune with the idealist and proto-romantic expectations of his German predecessors, including the youthful Hegel and his poet friend Hoelderlin. Behind it there lies the vision of the *polis* as the humanists saw it: not a fantastic never-never-land, but a concrete historical experience. In this sense it is doubtless true, (as has been suggested by R. C. Tucker), that Marxism has its roots in German idealism; though one need not follow him in his assertion that the common denominator is human self-deification.

THE evident attraction of this return to the origins lies in the revival of the concept of freedom: not as a mere ideal but as the central constituent of human nature. This was how Hegel viewed the matter, at any rate in his early writings, and the youthful Marx took over from him the idea that in and through history, men realize their latent potentialities. Socialism could then be defined as a struggle for the enlargement of human freedom, the obstacles resulting not simply from antagonistic class interests, but from past historic acquisitions, themselves due to the effort to overcome the resistance of the non-human environment. The concrete form of this dialectic is the "alienation" which makes men treat as external and "objective" what are in fact their own creations: the state, the moral law, etc. The only permanent reality is human freedom which projects itself into history, and the critical task consists in ceaselessly unmasking these seemingly non-human or super-human alienations, including the supreme alienation of all: religion. Clearly it is this vision which connects the young Marx with the Existentialist school. Indeed one can say that insofar as the New Left represents a philosophical attitude, it is just this synthesis of Marxism and Existentialism: with the qualification that its version of Marxism is somewhat selective and perhaps incompatible with the skeptical and less idealist thinking of the mature Marx. There is scarcely room in this philosophy for the notion that history is subject to discoverable and unalterable laws, and once this belief is abandoned, a good deal of thinking popularly called Marxist has to be revised.

No doubt it can be done. Marx himself drew a distinction between "conditioning" and outright determination. It may perhaps be said that while material conditions circumscribe our activity they do not determine it; that the human task under given historical circumstances is to enlarge the area of freedom; and that in our epoch this can only be done by socializing the means of production. There can be no logical objection to such a formulation, but the shift from causal determination to conscious activity implies that one has to reckon with the possibility of material failure. If it should turn out that historical circumstances are not, in our age, propitious to the realization of socialism so defined, the individual is thrown back on himself, or at most the socialist intellectuals are thrown back upon the task of criticizing the society surrounding them. At any rate they now have a yardstick independent of "history" in the Leninist sense of the term, i.e., Communist *Realpolitik*.

It is in this liberation from a kind of pseudo-"realism" that the enduring significance of the movement may be thought to lie. When Moscow proclaims that this or that abomination—Stalin's reign for choice—was "historically necessary" and therefore justified, or when Peking extends such reasoning in all seriousness to the prospect of nuclear war, it is not at first sight obvious that this kind of talk is simply an ex-post rationalization of politics in terms of an abstraction called "history." Real history, hu-

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man history, is always about human beings; it is the record of their prolonged struggle with nature and with themselves. In recovering this philosophical dimension with the help of the Hegelian categories employed by Marx in his time, the socialism of the New Left has at the same time recovered its critical freedom. If the atmosphere of Paris, and even of Warsaw, has once more become breathable, it is thanks to this intellectual liberation.

GEORGE LICHTHEIM *is a contributing editor. His book,* The New Europe, *is being published in this country by Frederick A. Praeger. He last appeared in our February number with a review of* Rationalism in Politics *by Michael Oakeshott.*

* * *

## PEOPLE GET HOOKED

### R. S. Baker

But after we got down to the Key that's when I really started digging it, what was happening. We walked into that place and everything was a hundred miles away. First kicks on horse are strange, just the strangest, just the biggest gas in life, you know. I guess that's why you keep on it. Everything was cold, but not terribly cold, just impersonally, beautifully cold and I saw all of these rows and rows of people and faces and everything and they were all just statues. They didn't mean anything to me. I sat down at the bar and Bim Connors was there too, and he kept insisting that we go out and smoke some pot; that's all I can remember of his conversation. He kept saying, "Well, I've got some pot, man. Don't you want to get high?" And I didn't realize it, but he'd been sitting there talking to me for about three quarters of an hour, sounding me. Finally he said, "Well, do you? Or don't you?" And I couldn't talk. I just sat there and smiled, listened to everything that everybody had to say but I didn't say anything; I couldn't. It was like being paralyzed in a very pleasant manner.

THE AMERICAN "narcotics problem" is an artificial tragedy with real victims. One such victim was "Janet Clark," the pseudonym of a young heroin addict whose tape-recorded confessions were published a couple of years ago in a volume titled *The Fantastic Lodge.** Reading passages in it such as the above, chosen almost at random, one realizes how little reality and compassion there have been in the prevailing notions of the drug addict. The studies in recent years by medical researchers, sociologists, and lawyers have done much to reveal the narrow, brutal, and ineffective framework of thinking that has governed our laws and attitudes concerning drug addiction. However, while directing attention to the artificiality of this social tragedy, the portraits of its victims drawn from scientific and legal data have tended to divest them of their actuality, not to mention their humanity. The gray image of the addicts produced by socio-medical research thus joins other, more lurid images of him that are prevalent in our culture, and while introducing a note of common sense and common justice into the rather hysterical discussion of the subject, has not particularly deepened public awareness of and concern for the plight of the addict.

The oldest and most popular view of the addict is that of the criminal dope fiend, the wild-eyed monster who rapes, robs, and murders between his fixes. This view underlies nearly all our narcotics laws, beginning with the Harrison Law of 1914 up to those of most recent vintage and greatest harshness, as well as the policies of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics during the long and grim tenure of Harry J. Anslinger. One result has been to make the medical profession shy away from treating addicts as patients and addiction as a pressing research problem; another has been to force tens of thousands of addicts into continuing symbiotic relationship with the criminal underworld or the police or both, usually precluding any chance of rehabilitation. The classification of the addict as a violent public enemy has justified many gross violations of our system of justice and such enormities as lobotomies to "cure" addiction.

Spawned and held to tenaciously by lawmakers and the police, this image has been spread through the culture by popular journalism. Along with being an ever sensational topic, drug addiction is one of several

* Edited by Helen Hughes, Houghton Mifflin (1961), 267 pp, $4.00.

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social problems whose discussion allows the reader to feel at once titillated and virtuously superior. Inevitably, too, it gets attached to the cold war; Mr. Anslinger and others have periodically invoked the specter of Red China poised in the wings, waiting to turn *everybody* on, or at least Our American Youth.

THIS IMAGE of the addict as a dangerous criminal who can be coped with only by the stringent enforcement of harsh laws screens off a number of well-established facts. Most American addicts are on one of the opiate series—usually heroin. The opiates are depressants, which sharply reduce aggressive and sexual drives. Most addict crime results directly from the cost of supporting a habit at underworld prices. Addicts who do not have to depend upon the underworld for their supply rarely become criminals or commit acts of violence. (One sure-fire way to suppress violence in our society would be to locate the potentially violent and get them hooked on heroin.) In terms of reducing addiction, the treatment of addicts as criminals produces vastly lower permanent cure rates, and, finally, after nearly a half century of exposing and persecuting the "junkie," the United States has the highest addiction rate of any Western nation.

On the other hand, literary intellectuals and more sophisticated journalists in the past decade have created a counter-image—the addict as a symbolic hero, the extreme example of the rebel-victim of the Eisenhower age. The prototype for the spate of narcotics-centered novels, plays, films, TV scripts, and sympathetic think-pieces during the 50's appears to have been Nelson Algren's tough-sentimental and successful, *The Man With The Golden Arm*. (Algren claims that the drug angle was added at the suggestion of his agent after the initial draft.) The writers of such works have tended to cast the addict in one of two roles, either as the supreme romantic, an adventurer in perception who dares to explore the farthest edges of consciousness or, more commonly, as ourselves writ large and naked. Most of us, after all, are hooked on *something*—alcohol, tobacco, tranquilizers, barbiturates, or, by extension, TV, sex, careers, secret fantasies. If addiction and its attendant rituals are denounced as a perverse attempt to fend off the contemporary tensions and terrors, how many of our other institutions of escape can withstand similar criticism? Such questions contain enough truth to embarrass: at times one is tempted to accept the man with the monkey on his back as the master symbol of a driven and drugged age.

Tempted, but not persuaded. For the rites of junk are too radically reductive to have an authentic relation to other modes of behavior. In the addict's shrunken world, all roles and rules are pre-assigned—the addict knows in advance the range of possible relationships in his eternal triangle of himself, his connection, and the police—and indeed, even the handful of words he will need to use. Moreover, to see the addict as a romantic hero or cultural anti-hero, one must ignore the masses of hard fact compiled by medicine and sociology. One must make a symbol out of a man who is finally most concretely described in terms of sclerosis, abscesses, degree of constipation, changes in blood sugar level and alteration of basal metabolism during withdrawal, whose life can be limned so quickly by psychological and social surveys.

Of the three current images of the junkie, the socio-medical one is far superior because it is the one most firmly grounded in verifiable fact. Still it is inadequate, because it takes its data as providing some sort of timeless, universal truth, rather than as partial descriptions of changing realities. (It is frightening to see how frequently statistics gathered forty years ago are cited in support or criticism of current or proposed policies.) More importantly, it tends to obscure the immediacy and depth of the addict's plight.

Further, the treble confusion of competing voices has a number of undesirable effects: the "experts" have difficulty in establishing any valid communication with each other (as witness the babel of the recent White House Conference on Narcotics); the baffled public sinks back into apathy; and the addict finds himself in a hopelessly mixed-up relation with his society, his encounter with any individual contingent upon the particular view of addiction the latter holds.

With all this in mind, one is in a better position to realize the indispensable value

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of a book like *The Fantastic Lodge*. Janet Clark begins by telling of her childhood—a crowded apartment during the Depression, a divorce, followed by a period of being shunted from one relative to another. Then her father's death, a first violent and senseless contact with sex, an attempt to escape into "culture." We follow her through an unguided adolescence in a big city where, with a peculiar combination of innocence and sophistication, she searches desperately for an identity. This phase ends with Janet miserably giving birth to the illegitimate child of her first lover. From this traumatic experience she drifts into the jazz world. Her "graduation" from Dixieland to white "cool" to colored is paralleled by her shifts from alcohol to marijuana to heroin. She has an abortive marriage. She tries college. She lives with a famous Negro singer, but sex is merely the currency—meaningless to her, valued by others—she must use to get what she wants from the world. She spends a short period on the fringes of intellectual Bohemia. She lives with an addicted trombone player, the only man in her life to whom she can truly relate. She makes a number of stabs at psychoanalysis. She is arrested. She goes to Lexington.

We are told in a post-script by the interviewer that in the five years following the making of the tapes she passed through the further stages: shoplifting, prostitution, several botched suicide attempts, self-commitment to a state mental hospital (one permissive enough to unwittingly allow her to remain on heroin and barbiturates), all leading finally to her death in the hospital of a self-administered overdose of barbiturates.

But to summarize is to corrupt. This down-hill path through sordidness and misery, though terrible, is by now trite—much as *Naked Lunch,* authentic but late, seems contrived. The book's interest lies in Janet's style, her ability to present both herself and her world as they are experienced. Her years were fewer than thirty and certainly messy enough, but she recalls them with a brightness of spirit that makes categorizing and moralizing finally seem irrelevant.

> We would get ready then, go in the bathroom, take a bath together, nice big hot bath, then I'd get out pyjamas and stuff and iron them and we'd put them on and we'd get ready, everything solid. We would never take off before brushing our teeth, in other words.

Similarly, she colors all events with her awareness. Her relations with the police, for example, become horrifyingly comic, for she is lucidly aware, in a way that no outside observer could ever be, of the absurdities in the behavior of the various enforcement and judicial hierarchies.

If one responds at all to Janet's style, the result is immediate compassion; the "forty to sixty thousand narcotics addicts" so glibly referred to at the White House Conference become forty to sixty thousand Janet Clarks. As one reads, there is a shift from thinking of a junkie who happens to have a specific history to an awareness of Janet, an attractive—albeit flawed—personality who has been drawn into an encounter with narcotics.

Janet's happiest memories are domestic, as when she redecorates an apartment for her man. She is obviously not a vicious social menace. Nevertheless, in using her as a measure of the absurdity of our present narcotics enforcement system, two objections might be raised. First, she is atypical. As a female and as a "white" (an estimated three-quarters of known U.S. addicts are Negro, Puerto Rican, or Mexican), she does not conform to the sociologist's model addict. But that is just the point. Once one starts adding qualifying adjectives to the label "addict," the process is ever more extensible—until we arrive again at the individual, and the addict is seen as a person. The mere existence of her "case" should serve as warning against using stereotypes, of whatever degree of sophistication.

A SECOND, more cogent stricture might be that Janet's fate could not have been otherwise, that with laws harsh or lenient there would have occurred the inevitable algebra of her needs and the "sweet death" heroin provides. Inexorably drifting toward trouble, she comes into contact with the drug world and one can hear the gears mesh in some horrible machine that will deposit her, dead, on the far side.

Yet we are not Greeks, and we can respond to her plight with more than pity and

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terror. It is surely possible to picture for her an alternative fate. In the 20's she might have been an alcoholic, boastfully worrying about going mad, fussing with her coiffure. Or, pitching her a few years into the future, one immediately senses that the 60's will have their own fashions in vice, that the H-craze was perhaps a lethal fad and may shortly be as exotically passé as opium smoking, having passed on with the jazz heroes who did so much to give it cachet. Or had she been raised in or moved to a small town she might have joined her counterparts, blithe but wounded spirits, those unwilling or unable either to join the square world or come to terms with it, releasing her defiance through the semi-Bohemianism of little theater, drinking too much, at parties rousing herself from the corner to wittily insult the guests, giving her husband much hell, and some joy. Janet Clark was, in short, a woman—a woman with whom it would have been possible to have fallen in love. Until *that* fact or any fact like it, is admitted, we cannot hope to have a just and effective system of narcotics control: we cannot achieve justice or even, we are beginning to recognize, simple truth.

*This is* R. S. BAKER'S *first appearance in the pages of* COMMENTARY. *Educated at the University of Chicago, he is now a member of the faculty at Oregon College of Education. He has published previously in the* Chicago Review.

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## On "Ship of Fools"

To the Editor of Commentary:

A little sense on Katherine Anne Porter's *Ship of Fools!* ["'Ship of Fools' & the Critics," October 1962] I don't see why Mr. Solotaroff's journalistic case for the prosecution was boxed off in white and featured on the cover of Commentary. *Ship of Fools* should not be read after or placed beside the masterpieces of the ages, but rather with such a book as Edith Wharton's *Age of Innocence*. In such a context, its virtues, to me at least, are obvious: it is one of the very few American novels (almost unique in this lately) that deserves to be long; the writing is always alert, modest, and honest. As for its gloom and grayness, I find them in their way glorious. For what it is worth, *Ship of Fools* is in the American Liberal Tradition, a tradition that most of us follow in our non-fiction, but one that is hardly attempted any more in imaginative work. For the Liberal, 1931, just as now, is a time to look blue! I can't see that the fact that *Ship of Fools* doesn't include such opposite Germans as Einstein, Hitler, and Thomas Mann is an indictment. It would be easy to picture an idealistic prosecuting attorney, such as Mr. Solotaroff, reading *Macbeth* (I am making no comparison), and saying its perverse darkness has no room for Erasmus, Spinoza, and Sir Francis Bacon.

Robert Lowell

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

I hope Theodore Solotaroff watched that recent TV panel discussion of *Ship of Fools*. He would have found critics reacting over the air the way most of them reacted in print. Even considering that Katherine Anne Porter—kindly, disarming, and gray-haired—was present, I thought the literary experts were unduly respectful. When the moderator was incautious enough at one point to hint that the book consisted of a series of vignettes rather than a plot, Glenway Wescott, the Mark Schorer of the program, overrode him firmly. The author then explained lamely but authoritatively that her characters "interacted." Nobody dared to suggest that the characters remained unchanged after the interaction. Thinks for Solotaroff's useful analysis. . . . I wish to register one small dissent: *Ship of Fools* was not "unexciting" or "tedious." Quite the contrary.

Oliver Pilat

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Bravo to Theodore Solotaroff for his brilliant and penetrating critique of Katherine Anne Porter's highly overrated *Ship of Fools*.

I was unable to conceive of the book as a masterpiece when I read it. However, no other critic was as clear-headed, discerning, and humanistic as Mr. Solotaroff in detailing the reasons for its failure.

Edward L. Hendel

Port Chester, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

My thanks to Mr. Solotaroff for his article. . . . I seem to have found more humor in the book (especially in the opening pages) than he did, but my general impressions were much like his . . . I trust I will be forgiven for adumbrating two points which disturbed me in the article.

Mr. Solotaroff notes that one of the factors which led to favorable reviews was the memory of Miss Porter's earlier work. And he seems to agree with the generally favorable assessment of her short stories. With reference to *Ship of Fools,* however, his position appears to be that the fault ultimately lies in Miss Porter's sensibility: in particular, in her attitude to matters sexual. . . . Then how does one account for the valuable earlier work . . . ? Mr. Solotaroff refers . . . to the fact that the novel was produced "late in life." If this is important and bears on the differences between the novel and the short stories, then surely it should be dealt with directly . . . rather than by innuendo. . . .

Secondly . . . there are hints throughout the article that the widespread critical failure Mr. Solotaroff describes is somehow a product (at least in part) of general critical attitudes toward contemporary literature. I found Mr. Solotaroff extremely convincing



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on the subjects of "solid" 19th century novelistic virtues and 20th century novelistic techniques. But I searched in vain for a clear definition of critical attitudes toward contemporary literature or, more important, of the connection between those attitudes and the reception given *Ship of Fools*. . . .

JAN G. DEUTSCH
Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I find it so hard to believe that a reviewer lacks as much knowledge of depth psychology as Solotaroff apparently does . . . that I am convinced his shallowness is explained by his unwillingness, rather than his inability, to come to grips with this book. He reacts to the "ship" symbolism like a hot potato, only too anxious to drop it and declare . . . that a ship is merely a ship and a voyage is merely a voyage, though tedious. He is still obliged to tell us something about the "ship" which he does in as undynamic a way as possible, but he can no longer tell us anything about its feeling and its direction. He attempts to cover this deficiency with two standard gambits. . . . First, the author is essentially anti-sexual and, therefore, misanthropic—and secondly, she is an emotional invalid, unable to come to grips with the special violence of some characters as opposed to others.

However, what if a ship is not a ship, and a voyage not a voyage? What if the ship is where we are now, in this world, and the voyage is (as it is symbolically so often) toward death? Then, some of the things that Solotaroff found objectionable make a lot more sense. For instance, the unchangeability of most of the characters makes you horrifyingly aware that most of them are literally moving toward deterioration and decay and one is actually dying. . . .

Miss Porter's handling of sex is understandable within the same terms. Instead of flowing from love, sex takes on the distorted function (so common in our culture) of a desperate attempt at self-renewal in the face of death. . . .

What about Miss Porter's treatment of the Germans? . . . Each of the German (as well as non-German) characters has isolated death from his character structure. This makes it perfectly feasible for them to use others as sacrificial replacements for various rationalizations. . . .

Solotaroff, like so many COMMENTARY reviewers, cannot face up to existence: to life and death. But he needn't despair, for he has good and illustrious company. Forty years ago Freud proposed the existence of the death instinct, and for forty years American psychoanalysts have winked at the Old Man and sold the staple items of genitality and orgasm. . . .

(DR.) MELVIN RUBENSTEIN
Saint Louis, Missouri

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Solotaroff . . . makes a case that I found myself calling into question. It is summed up in the sentence: "The threat of 'the terrible failure of the life of man' that lurks at the Captain's table is far less that of genocide than of sloth and gastritis." This is to miss the point by stating it. Miss Porter has a keen sense for the puerile character of the *vehicles* for the evil that broke forth in Germany, . . . which severely qualifies Mr. Solotaroff's attack. He has failed to see that "the force of that monstrous romanticism, of the potential for active evil in the character of German nationalism," is a structure independent of personalities, albeit working through them. . . . Apparently upset over Miss Porter's failure to develop heroic figures of evil, e.g., in the mode of Shakespeare, . . . Mr. Solotaroff fails to appreciate the distinction upon which the novel is based—that the characters are haphazard and random vehicles for evil, subject to forces to which they respond without self-awareness. This accounts for the force of their *unconscious* brutality.

The attempt to identify an author's voice in his work . . . is almost always a disastrous critical maneuver . . . Mr. Solotaroff's remarks about the "presence and pressure of Miss Porter's sensibility" are not persuasive. Here again he fails to see how the given characters are defined by their *unconscious* response to the forces of disorder and destruction. . . . An attempt to characterize and express a sick age . . . should not be indicted for neglecting the healing powers that may or may not also be operative. We may be tired at this point of such examination of the pathological—perhaps the book is twenty years too late—but Miss Porter at least raises the question of the possible death of the prophetic spirit in our time. . . .

PAUL A. LEE
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Bless Solotaroff for his audacious demolition of *Ship of Fools*. In my social circle we have timidly revealed to each other a now unanimous conviction that the critics

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have "hoaxed" the reading public. The self-flagellating and masochistic school of writers and critics have pandered profitably to an element in our society which apparently enjoys occasional cathartic whip-lashing. . . .

MURRAY BARON

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It was a pleasure to read the blunt, no-nonsense Solotaroff piece on *Ship of Fools*. I got the same kind of pleasure out of Dwight Macdonald's job on *By Love Possessed* a few years back.

Now, both Katherine Anne Porter and James Gould Cozzens have produced substantial and estimable work in the past. They have written seriously and without compromise and have never before hit the golden jackpot. . . .

I don't begrudge the authors the jackpots, if only for their past efforts. But I do think it is salutary when an honest critic cuts through the reviewers' nonsense of equating pretension with importance, misanthropy with depth. . . .

GEORGE SKLAR

Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It is refreshing to find someone who has taken the time to really analyze this book, without having succumbed to the bedazzled outpourings of the critics who, in this instance at least, have lost their critical faculty.

. . . There is no plot whatsoever to *Ship of Fools*. There is only a throwing together of a conglomerate number of people whom Miss Porter has given no redeeming features, seeing only their weaknesses. . . . There should be room in a novel which an author has shaped over a period of twenty years, to include at least one or two characters whose lives might add up to something more than unrelieved sordidness and degradation. . . .

BEATRICE HIRSCH

Long Beach, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Until I read Theodore Solotaroff's sober, correct, and courageous analysis of *Ship of Fools* I had lost all hope concerning the competence or the sanity of American literary criticism. . . .

That this book lacks the essential quality of a novel in that not a single character has real growth and that it has no clear development of plot has already been noted by others. My further objection is that in her antipathy toward human beings this writer can detect neither joy, nor laughter, nor decency. . . .

As for the character of the Jew, Löwenthal—did any of the anti-Semitic Germans on that ship hate Löwenthal with more enthusiasm than the author? Here is a Jew, crude, ignorant, course, obnoxious, despicable. . . . The human race whose frailties this writer pursues so avidly, and for whose imperfections she sorrows so deeply—since it has such a friend in Miss Porter, has it any need of an enemy?

ALFRED BRANT

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . That Miss Porter wrote a novel without compassion is no defect. It's an innovation. Do we ask compassion too of the abstract artist and the modern composer?

In an era of smugness and complacency . . . the hatchet job Miss Porter did on humanity deserves applause for its message, "we are all to blame." There are plenty of books to restore our faith in the future of humanity. From *Ship of Fools* we can turn to them with no illusions that we are lovable as we are.

JULIA EDWARDS

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Miss Porter understands the complexites of people, the good and evil in them, and the shades of gray. In her book she clearly makes the point that every one of us—Jew and Gentile, German and Mexican, doctors, countesses, the comfortably off and the poor, the young, the old and the middle-aged—has his problems. Because she is a great artist she makes us feel it keenly; sometimes in reading about it we're uncomfortable. . . . Sometimes the book seems pitiless. But Miss Porter is never without compassion—or hopeless. Mr. Solotaroff forgets, to point to only a few omissions, that there is an innocent, newly married couple who remain completely unaware of anything but their own happiness; he forgets the truths that come out of the mouth of the professor's wife; he forgets that the gentile German thinks longingly of his wife just before the ship docks at Bremerhaven; and he forgets the man who jumps overboard to save whoever (or whatever) is drowning.

It is Mr. Solotaroff, not Miss Porter, who makes the encounter of Löwenthal (an unattractive Jew) and Freitag (the gentile married to a Jew), "the dramatic center of

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the novel." . . . To say that the implication of this encounter is that "the fate of Germany and its Jews reduces to the encounter of two particularly obnoxious breeds of inhumanity. . . " is to misinterpret completely what is in the pages of *Ship of Fools* itself.

And where does Mr. Solotaroff find grounds for the accusation that Miss Porter shows a "contemptuous and morbid attitude toward human sexuality?" It is the neurotic, often "morbid" characters in the book who have "sick" sexual attitudes, not Miss Porter.

I know it is almost irresistible to snipe when someone is as far out front as Miss Porter, but Mr. Solotaroff is not an Elizabeth Hardwick, or even a Dwight Macdonald.

CYRILLY ABELS

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I enjoyed Mr. Solotaroff's comments on *Ship of Fools*. . . . Perhaps the main difference between *Ship of Fools* and *The Magic Mountain* . . . might be that after finishing *The Magic Mountain* one felt a surge of hope, a faith in man; after finishing *Ship of Fools* one felt if not catatonic, completely hopeless and faithless. . . .

PAULINE J. SCHECHTER

Rockaway Beach, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I recently glanced through *On Moral Courage* by Compton Mackenzie. . . . On page 122 I found the following remarks by Katherine Anne Porter quoted from an article in *Encounter*: "When I first read it . . . I thought it a dreary, sad performance with some passages of unintentional, hilarious low comedy, one scene at least simply beyond belief in a book written with such *inflamed apostolic solemnity*. Nowhere in this sad history can you see anything but a long, dull grey, monotonous chain of days, lightened now and then by a sexual bout. I can't hear any music, or poetry, or the voices of friends or children. There is no wine, no food, no sleep, no refreshment, *no laughter, no rest and quiet—no love*. I remembered then that this is the fevered daydream of a dying man . . . indulging his sexual fantasies." (Italics mine.)

Miss Porter's remarks refer to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. I thank you very much for Mr. Solotaroff's brilliant article. He, with much excellent argument, and Miss Porter unintentionally, hit the nail on the head.

L. H. GRUNEBAUM

Scarsdale, New York

## Bazelon, Pro and Con

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations on your publication of the series of articles ["The Paper Economy," September 1962; "The Scarcity Makers," October 1962; "The Politics of the Paper Economy," November 1962] by David T. Bazelon. His ideas are so varied and original that one can hardly agree with all of them in detail. But his stress upon the distinction between the real wealth of nations and the symbols of economic and financial accounting is brilliantly developed. More important still, everyone needs to hear what he has to say, for the phenomenal neglect of this distinction is directly at the heart of our failure during the past decade or longer to use our resources fully and to devote them more effectively to the ultimate purposes of a free and aspiring society.

LEON H. KEYSERLING

Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The American economy is shuddering and rattling, and David T. Bazelon's series on the "Paper Economy" provides an acute diagnosis of the malaise. He is pioneering in economic geriatrics, and I am satisfied that he is close to the source of assorted ailments that could, in a short enough time, bring down the nation.

However, this is a long way from the general view among economists, and I hope that COMMENTARY has arranged for a reply. I am anxious to see, not another defense of conventional economic theory, but a point-by-point discussion of Bazelon's main theses. The debate is a crucial one, for if our economic theories are the sentimentalized and useless relics Bazelon makes them out to be, we clearly are proceeding, energetically and mindlessly, toward no goals at all.

W. H. FERRY

Santa Barbara, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

When David T. Bazelon says ". . . . we are trying quite unsuccessfully to deal with a runaway technology within the framework of an archaic business-profit system," he comes very close to saying what needs to be said about the so-called "American Way." . . .

What needs to be said is that . . . our system is proving to be a helluva way to run a railroad, or a space program, or a foreign policy, or any of the other things that need doing in and around the nation today.

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One of the reasons we are so unsuccessful at any but the superficialities of success, I'm afraid, is our unwillingnes to be honest with ourselves and each other. A result, as Mr. Bazelon implies, is our utterly phony obsession with perpetuating a thing that nobody really wants and which probably really won't work anymore—industrial competition. Though business talks a great competitive game, it risks jail sentences by rigging markets for everything from giant turbines to garden hose. Labor, through insistence on industry-wide and nation-wide bargaining, has availed itself of monopolistic practices that would have done a Carnegie proud. And in government, most of the career administrators and many of the legislators have no stomach for the unplanned and uncontrolled inherences of true competition. . . .

. . . What really frightens me is that we lose out to Communism because of our stubborn refusal to adjust our system to match the Soviet Union's increasing competence. For, until the day when we can watch a Soviet space platform break over the horizon . . . like a harvest moon, and be secure in the knowledge that its crew is interested in geodetics, weather analysis, and a head count of whooping cranes, we had better start looking for a new approach, or radical improvements in the old. It's a matter of survival.

H. T. Rowe

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . David T. Bazelon certainly makes me think about the problems he deals with more vigorously and painfully than anyone else I have read on this subject recently . . .

Adam Yarmolinsky

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor of Commentary:

I thought David T. Bazelon did an outstanding job, not only in analyzing the problem, but in the basic research as well as the lucidity with which the articles were presented.

Paul Ziffren

Los Angeles, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Bazelon has his breath taken away by a commonplace statistic that he finds characteristic of his deliberately wasteful (paper) society. He states that we scrapped, because of deficiencies in autos, 4,340,000 cars in one year. [But] . . . according to the *Statistical Abstract of the U.S.*, in 1955 we had 62 million cars registered; in 1960 73.7 million; in 1961 75.8 million. We scrapped in 1958 4.1 million plus 538,000 trucks and busses; in 1959 4.5 million plus 691,000 trucks and busses. In 1961, 28 per cent of registered cars were more than eight years old, about 21 million, and this is the significant statistic.

One cannot take the ratio of cars scrapped to those registered in any given year as an index of deficiencies, for the oldest of a series when registration was lower than now were presumably the first to be scrapped. But 21 million cars were more than eight years old —not a bad record of durability. . . .

Marcus A. Heyman

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . It is high time that some new ideas appeared in the field of economics, and I think economists like Mr. Bazelon and Robert Theobald are among those in the forefront of an exciting and important new approach which will make many of our customary attitudes appear old-fashioned.

Clarkson N. Potter

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

David T. Bazelon's series on the "Paper Economy". . . gave me a "shock of recognition"; here . . . in only slightly different language, was the Technocracy thesis of 1932. . . . This is not to imply a lack of originality or perception on the part of Mr. Bazelon, but rather to speculate whether an "idea whose time has come" may not be about to get another airing.

The Technocrats of 1932 . . . made dramatic headlines with the thesis that technology smashed the price system: the abolition of scarcity by productivity had rendered unworkable a system of allocation based upon property rights, price, and a monetary-debt system predicated upon promises to pay which assumed an indefinitely expanding physical production. The themes of Mr. Bazelon's and the Technocratic analysis are strikingly similar: technological abolition of the scarcity conditions necessary to the workings of capitalism; the lack of correspondence between paper activities and allocation of physical goods; the analysis of property as social limitation rather than thing-ness; the functions of money and debt. Of interest, too, is the Veblenian point of departure for both viewpoints . . . the contradictions between the rules of the game and the goals of entrepreneurs caught up in

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the Price System, and the "real" world, with the differing rationality of the production technologist and engineer. . . .

The crucial policy problem posed by the theme, "technological abundance destroys scarcity" (and its paper economy), is how to perform economic allocation under such conditions. Here the Technocrats made their utopian proposal—in the sense of an unrealistic departure from existing cultural limits. Scrap the entire paper system, they said, and replace it with a "real" system of accounting based on units of energy measurement, continuously fed into a central computer system. Thus, under conditions of abundance, resource allocation at the primary and secondary industry levels could be nearly continuously determined by registration of consumer behavior. Given further decisions about social overhead costs and services, this is a model of a totally planned, publicly-owned, economy. . . .

"The validity of paper in the absence of scarcity is unthinkable without conscious control of its quantity and/or value," emphasizes Mr. Bazelon. Writing as he does in a period of less acute economic crisis than the 1930's, and thus without its apocalyptic social visions, it will be of considerable interest to see what proposals he comes up with for achieving this end.

HENRY ELSNER, JR.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mr. Bazelon's series of articles seems to be chiefly noteworthy for their unwarranted conclusions based on unprovable assumptions.

For example, in the first article ["The Paper Economy," Sept. '62] Mr. Bazelon refers to Franklin Roosevelt as that friend and benefactor of the bankers. . . . Implicit in the writing is the thought that the banking class of the United States recognized and loved FDR for saving their bacon. . . . In fact, the very mention of Roosevelt to my conservative friends . . . sends the temperature of the room up a number of degrees. . . .

If I understand Mr. Bazelon correctly, he is proposing his own form of Veblenism . . . if U.S. Steel would only produce steel at something close to 100 per cent of capacity instead of just over the 60 per cent level, we would not throw the excess steel into the sea. . . . I agree; we would not. We would store it in leaky warehouses at twice the rent that the warehouses were worth until such time as the steel rusted to the point of no return. . . . What I am trying to say is that increasing production is the very least of our problems. Distributing it is the stumbling block, which Mr. Bazelon makes no attempt to leap over, walk around, or push out of the way. . . .

[Mr. Bazelon] . . . refers to the conspiracy between government, industry, and banking to perpetuate this paper economy of scarcity. I assume he means *unconscious* conspiracy as opposed to cabal. He cannot be proposing that there is a *conscious* meeting of minds among the three groups. . . .

Nowhere . . . does Mr. Bazelon refer to the greatest failing of our country . . . universal (or almost universal) suffrage, without universal education. . . . The reality of the situation is that the people of the United States like paper money; they like being able to buy what their neighbor cannot; they like owning small pieces of AT & T; and they like the illusion of security that what Mr. Bazelon calls the Paper Economy brings. If Mr. Bazelon wishes to change all this he must attack it at the source and not try to superimpose a system from above. . . . That source is education. I suppose that is exactly what these articles are trying to do—educate the reader to an idea. If so, they fail, for they succeed only in irritating. . . .

WILLIAM MAYLEAS

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mr. Bazelon has . . . distorted the central fact of American political life—the unprecedented and growing power of the Federal government, especially the executive branch. . . .

One does not have to accept Mills's conception of the "power elite" to realize that the vast power of government is not controlled by the electorate. The separation of policy-making from politics is almost complete. Only infrequently is the electorate aroused to play its theoretical role. . . .

. . . These elite rulers are not just figureheads, [but] in fact rule. Most elite leadership finds its home in the Executive Department and its correlative agencies. The demise of Congress is no secret, except perhaps to Congressmen. . . . The Executive Department exerts tremendous and growing power because it has had both the desire and the ability to act decisively. As a result, executive power reaches every part of our economy. . . .

The President is the undisputed head of this power-wielding force. . . . By setting national goals, by declaring national emer-

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gencies, by relying on and substantially molding the dinosaur of public opinion, he can uncheck the checks and unbalance the balances of a system which already gives him incredible power. . . .

CHRIS VASILLOPULOS

Hobart College
Geneva, New York

MR. BAZELON *writes:*

To my friends and other flatterers, thank you very much—and I hope you're right.

To Mr. Rowe, I might agree with you about our lack of candor. Certainly in an early tomorrow, the issue will in all candor be one of survival. But not survival of "true competition," whether by government, labor, or industry—but rather survival of government, labor, and industry with or without true competition, because . . . there hasn't been any lately. It seems silly to say it, but we will just have to make do without.

Mr. Heyman would like to engage in a statistical argument. But if I did, I would have to go to the *Statistical Abstract*—and he has already been there. Besides, he is happy about 21 million cars more than eight years old—much happier I am sure, than the people who have to drive them . . . and what about the 4,340,000 cars scrapped in that particular year?

I am not a Technocrat, Dr. Elsner. But I do stand on the belief that Veblen was all by himself, a giant. I rather think that Technocracy was the first *reductio ad absurdum* response to the initial sunburst of Veblen's insights. . . . (Are you mixing up Veblen and Technocracy? They are not the same.) I would not scrap the whole paper system—I wouldn't even think about doing it: that sort of thing is certain to drive you crazy. Besides, the point is not whether *I* scrap it, but what everybody else does. . . . Under conditions of abundance, the ancient issue of justice tends to lose its point. If we're a little wiser about it, we can get along a while longer under the paper system without killing ourselves about its validity. That is a spiritual, not a bread-and-butter problem. (I pointedly offered no proposals, Dr. Elsner—just impressions and analysis: the excess of irrelevant ideas is a greater problem than the lack of concrete technical proposals.)

Mr. Mayleas, sir: I am in the habit of making wisecracks, not explaining them—you will have to struggle with the FDR-banker thing as best you can. As for my Veblenism, yes, it is mine. But it doesn't seem to have much connection with yours. The problem is, if you like the phrasing, of distribution. Now what?

Finally, I give ground to no one in my devotion to education. . . . But what, really, is your point? I know that the American people like the Paper Economy—in fact, I said so in clear print a few times. Indeed, I was so convinced of the fact that I did not (and do not now) have the courage to tell them what they should be interested in instead. Do you? (And I am sorry I irritated you: all I meant to do, was to disturb you terribly.)

Mr. Vasillopulos, you are wrong. You don't see where the power is in this society. Do you think that "elite" is a dirty word in sociology? No, it is a transcendant fact where you and I live. And it is not limited to the Federal government—indeed, it is an afterthought there: the Federal elite is, literally, the result exclusively of the confused abandonment of elite power elsewhere in society. (Which will not continue much longer, incidentally.) You say: "Most elite leadership finds its home in the Executive Department and its correlative agencies." You must be joking. In a recent contest between this all-powerful elite and an organization representing less than a quarter-million doctors, the Federal government was unable to *give* medical care to millions of aged citizens who desperately wanted and needed it. What tyranny! But day-by-day and in millions of ways, and to the tune of billions of dollars of social effect (though you can't measure this sort of thing in dollars), the unnoticed elites of finance and industry literally decide, for their own absurd purposes, just exactly what we shall think and feel and want from tomorrow. . . . Power is not something evil people do to cause us trouble—it is something society creates to keep in business. . . .

## Jewish Resistance

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While I largely agree with Professor Handlin's considerations, and generous intentions ["Jewish Resistance to the Nazis," November 1962], I think that his vindication of European Jews leads him to statements which need correction and further analysis:

(1) He writes: ". . . some Jews did resist. How many? As many as among other peoples who were subjected to direct Nazi occupation. . . . The Jews were no more tractable than any other groups of people."

The comparison with "other peoples" is here simply fallacious, since these other

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peoples were not doomed to physical extermination. . . . How exactly other peoples would have behaved in the hopeless situation faced by the Jews is probably not answerable; such an experience remains historically unique. It is, however, reasonable to surmise that they would have offered more physical resistance, at different stages of the process. Mr. Handlin himself gives a corresponding clue, when he describes how "at the edge of the grave . . . the father did not leap like a beast at the beasts who were about to shoot him down. In his world, there were at that moment better things to do."

What he thus reminds us of is the tradition of the Jewish galut, which accounts for so many things: for the horror of physical violence; for the faith in God's wisdom and benevolence (which he finely describes); and also for a *sui generis* submissiveness toward the gentile powers, which one might fight with ruse, with bribes, with "influence," but not with arms. Such still remained, for the greater part, the world of East European Jewry; as Mr. Handlin rightly puts it, "in its own terms, it needs no defense.". . .

(2) As is often the case with gifted historians, an error of Mr. Handlin's brings us to the right path. By this I mean his improper use of the concept of *Kiddush ha-Shem*. The Jewish martyrs of the past died in most cases without fighting back; but *Kiddush ha-Shem* implied a choice, to submit to idolatry or baptism. . . . The "passive" acceptance of death by our forefathers, for the sake of their spiritual freedom, had a profound objective sense—while the lack of resistance of Eastern European Jews during the recent catastrophe, which subjectively anchored in the same tradition, hurts us just because it was senseless. By leaving them with no other alternative than to die . . . the Nazi juggernaut robbed the Jewish martyrdom of its positive significance.

From this point of view, the militancy of Israeli youth (which was prefigured in the epic of the Warsaw and other ghettos) represents a radical breach with the galut tradition. . . .

(3) A last remark: I regret that Mr. Handlin has considered it fit to mention Jews who welcomed Nazis as liberators, in the Ukraine or elsewhere in the Soviet Union. Among the thousands of documents which I have studied, I never met with such a statement; it surely happened, since he says it did; many extraordinary things may happen between heaven and earth—but such a fact could only have been exceptional, and by giving it the appearance of a relatively current fact, Mr. Handlin mars with a useless sordid irony his very fine article.

LÉON POLIAKOV
Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes
Paris, France

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Dr. Handlin's article on "Jewish Resistance to the Nazis" is one of the most eloquent defenses of the Jewish efforts to face the horrors of Hitler's minions.

By placing the role of the six million Jews in the proper perspective, Dr. Handlin has undone the calumnies cast by Raul Hilberg and Professor H. R. Trevor-Roper upon Jewish courage. . . .

M. H. LEVINE
Willimantic State College
Willimantic, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his attack on Raul Hilberg and H. R. Trevor-Roper, Professor Oscar Handlin . . . virtually states that [Jewish] resistance was the rule rather than the exception! . . . His article, however . . . does not even present evidence of enough resistance to throw doubt on Hilberg's conclusion (based on the most exhaustive study anyone has made of the documents) that there was an "almost complete lack of resistance." . . . The Jewish *maquisards* and partisans were not merely "perceived by the Germans" as Communist, Poles, Frenchmen, etc. That is what they *were* for any purpose relevant in this context. . . . Their resistance was not resistance by Jews *as Jews* to the Germans in the process of killing Jews. The lack of *such* resistance is what Hilberg reports, so that references to Jewish participation in various national resistance movements completely miss his point.

From his allegation that the Jews *did* resist, Professor Handlin moves easily to the conclusion that the degree of resistance that occurred (a high one, he is convinced) made no difference in the outcome, and that had there been even more resistance it would have made no difference either. But since the premise . . . is false, and is certainly not proved by Mr. Handlin, his conclusion naturally collapses. What makes the "final solution" so hard to fathom, among other things, is the ridiculously small amount of "human" and physical resources with which the Germans were able to accomplish it, as I know from my work with the prosecution

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in the Nuremberg *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing groups) case. No one who is not himself a survivor of concentration camps or *Einsatzgruppen* "actions" has a right to say that the Jewish victims could or should have resisted. But no one can say with assurance that things would not have turned out differently, that there would not have been more survivors, if Jewish mass resistance had presented the Germans with problems and repercussions different from and more substantial than the rather simple organizational tasks they faced. . . .

Finally, when Hilberg comments on Jewish non-resistance to the Nazis, he is *not* "blaming the catastrophe on its victims" . . . What Hilberg has done is to state an historical fact: that the Jews, except for a relatively small number of persons in very few instances, did not resist their murderers. And a fact does not become an "unfact" merely because it hurts. Moreover, insofar as the fact of non-resistance concerns the Orthodox Jewish victims of the Nazis, there is no reason why it should hurt those who, like Mr. Handlin, value and respect the spirituality and faith of those Jews. . . .

FREDERIC S. BURIN
Dept. of Political Science
Graduate Faculty
New School for Social Research
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Oscar Handlin has performed a valuable service with his article on Jewish resistance. . . . I have never seen any estimate of the age, sex, or state of health of the six million unfortunates now being vilified. Are we not perhaps expecting . . . resistance on the part of babies, women, the aged, the infirm? Mr. Bettelheim and Mr. Hilberg had better return to their studies, but this time with objectivity.

VERA FEINGOLD
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Without polemic and with none of the hurt pride so evident in many Jewish reviews of Dr. Hilberg's book, admirable in many respects, Oscar Handlin has squarely faced and answered the questions raised by it. . . .

. . . We have not the right to make invidious comparisons; only those who were there and who suffered have that right. It is very easy to forget the many acts of selflessness, yes, of heroism, that took place among the Jews of the ghetto. And who can accuse us of forgetting when we do not even know of these deeds? The great wealth of material in the libraries of YIVO and Yad Washem is almost totally unmined for the American reader.

. . . There is an urgent need to bring to the English reading public a full account of the life of the Jews under the German occupation. A mere recital of the facts, devoid of special pleading, would change the thinking of many American Jews. . . .

(DR.) LEONARD TUSHNET
Maplewood, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is always sad to see how the scapegoat, even after he has paid with his life, becomes once more the accused. . . . It is to the credit of an historian . . . to force the reexamination of the question, "why did the Jews not resist?" . . .

It has been my observation that the question of Jewish resistance (or passivity) has more often than not been posed in accusatory tones . . . and that the accusation generally comes from Jews who harbor a not too deeply concealed anti-Jewishness of their own. . . .

(DR.) JAMES MANN
Waban, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The prevailing attitude among Western Jews at the time of Hitler was . . . that they were Germans, Dutchmen, Danes, etc. *first,* and their religion was Jewish. . . . The Western European Jew, and in particular the German Jew, considered himself so much a part of his country that he expected that his non-Jewish countrymen would not allow anything to happen to him. . . .

There was no active or militant organization in Germany or any part of Western Europe to even attempt resistance *when there was still time for it.* . . .

. . . In 1933 world opinion held that Hitler would not last long. And active resistance was possible up to 1934, at the very latest. How could one expect the German Jews at that time to *know* what would happen five years later? . . .

H. C. FLEMING
Montreal, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Having personally experienced and witnessed the deportation of a representative East European Jewish community (the Jews of Karpato, Russia), I wish to state a few facts in support of Mr. Handlin's thesis.

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First, there was no possibility of forming an underground resistance organization either in the towns and villages or in the woods. Leaving aside the terrible moral dilemma of what to do about the women and children who could not have existed in the woods, and thus would be left as objects of retaliation to the enemy, an underground organization in this area was precluded because of the sympathy of the gentile population (Ruthenes and Hungarians) with the German policy of deportation. . . .

The second point is that the Jews of this area sincerely believed in April–May, 1944 that they were being taken to work camps, where families would remain intact, and where they would wait out the war. Had the truth been known, perhaps desperate measures would have been taken. . . .

HARVEY FIELDS

Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Having read Professor Trevor-Roper's summary of Mr. Hilberg's book and Dr. Bettelheim's charges against the Frank family, I marvel that people are so intellectually desperate for answers that they go so far as to turn the victims of this black time into the wrongdoers. How have we sunk so low in our own thinking that we publish Mr. Trevor-Roper's and Dr. Bettelheim's crass, de-humanized answers?

(MRS.) LUCILLE HAUSER

White Plains, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Oscar Handlin's essay should serve as a final and definitive answer to all the confused and bedeviled arguments on this issue. The mere suggestion that the victims were responsible for their fate, and had power to change it . . . desecrates the memory of the dead and the culture they lived by. . . .

MENAHEM STEINBERG

Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mr. Handlin in quoting Mr. Hermann Friedrich Graebe referred to him as a "Nazi eye-witness." If Mr. Handlin mistakenly described him as a Nazi, the least I can say is that he committed a grave and shockingly regrettable error. . . . Mr. Graebe came to this country a couple of years after World War II, because his life and that of his wife and child were threatened by the Nazis in Germany. He is now an American citizen and resides in California.

During World War II he was the head of a German construction firm "Firma Jung" in Zdolbunow in the Ukraine which was invaded by Hitler's troops. Soon after his arrival there he took it upon himself to rescue as many victims of Hitler's "final solution" program as was humanly possible. At the risk of his own life he succeeded in saving many Jewish lives. Among them was the young woman who is now my wife. . . .

Mr. Graebe was the only German employed by the U.S. War Crimes Commission after World War II. He was the only German to furnish testimony against the Nazis in the Nuremberg trial. His depositions were read in the opening speeches at Nuremberg and at the Eichmann trial. His humanitarianism has been widely acclaimed in many publications since the end of the war. And the mere mention of his name brings tears to the eyes of those who knew him at that time. More recently a portion of his testimony was published in Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. . . .

J. S. BOBROW

Forest Hills, New York

MR. HANDLIN *writes:*

I am sincerely grateful to Mr. Bobrow for calling my attention to my error in referring to H. F. Graebe as a Nazi eye-witness.

## China & the U. S.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Permit me to congratulate you most heartily and warmly on your publication of the featured article by Oscar Gass ["China and the United States," November 1962]. As one who lived in China for two years as the Director in charge of the operations of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), I became deeply interested in the fate of China, and have followed ever since the intensely interesting struggle by Communism to conquer the seemingly insoluble problems presented by over-population and poverty in China.

In my judgment, Mr. Gass has made the shrewdest, most impartial analysis which has yet been presented of the checkered career and the difficulties of . . . the Communists in China, many of them created by Communism itself and its contradictions, but also inherent in the nature of Chinese life and the inadequacy of the land to support the many millions who now live within its borders. . . .

BENJAMIN H. KIZER

Spokane, Washington

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To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . [Oscar Gass's] article seemed out of place in a journal of quality such as yours. The gingerbread style reminds me of a macadam road during a spring thaw after a heavy winter, full of chuck holes which bring one to sudden, jerking halts with one's brain reeling.

The writer is evidently in favor of recognizing Red China for various reasons, but he makes it quite evident that to offer to do so would only lead to a kick in the teeth diplomatically. He makes a good case for continuing our present policy.

(Dr.) Eugene Weiss
South Bend, Indiana

To the Editor of Commentary:

Oscar Gass's . . . provocative article effectively disposes of many over-simplified assumptions that people have about United States relations with China, and I think a large majority of his judgments are sound. . . .

A. Doak Barnett
Dept. of Government
Columbia University
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Having done a little reading in the field in connection with an article I published some years ago on Maurice William, the immigrant American author of *The Social Interpretation of History* who critically influenced Sun Yat-sen's thinking about Communism, and having long been a supporter of the government of Chiang Kai-shek, I think I may say that Mr. Gass's characterization of the Kuomintang regime of 1927–1949 as fascist is, if not disingenuous, simple-minded, fuzzy, and rhetorical. But it is hardly necessary to quarrel in detail with a speculative thesis which was out of date before it saw the light of print. I found it deliciously ironic, too, that in the same issue the much more luminous pages by Mr. Morgenthau on Cuba were hidden under a bushel in the back pages. . . .

Milton Hindus
Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

## Bay State Politics

To The Editor of Commentary:

Massachusetts, with some degree of justice, has become fair game as a target for the intellectual and the political analyst—which, when the two are combined, becomes pseudo-analysis. . . .

John Phillips's somewhat surrealistic piece ["Up In Massachusetts," November 1962] says some things which need to be said—and others which are savagely unfair. As usual, we find the viewpoint of the civilized gentleman bemused by the Anglo-Saxon heritage who finds himself wandering about among the political savages of the Bay State. As a result, there are some errors of fact and of interpretation.

The most egregious factual error: "Last winter, Governor Volpe fired the custodian of the State House archives, a former legislator who watched over the scrolls and parchments of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, because he had been making book. . . ." A minor point—Governor Volpe had nothing to do with the dismissal. A major one—the man fired for taking bets was the head of the Legisiative Document Room, which gives out copies of bills pending before the Legislature and related material; the man, who is indeed a former legislator, had nothing to do with the archives, and—most important of all—this is an unintentional but nonetheless serious reflection upon the State Archivist, who is a well-known historian and authority in such areas as the microfilming of documents. I think your magazine and Mr. Phillips owe him an apology for confusing him with the head of the Legislative Document Room.

George D. Blackwood
Dept. of Political Economy
Boston University
Boston, Massachusetts

To The Editor of Commentary:

Thank you and congratulations for the publication of John Phillips's entertaining and very sensitive article "Up In Massachusetts."

. . . The author refers to the "San Francisco Convention of 1960." I am a native of San Francisco and was living in the Bay Area during all of 1960. I can recall no major convention of a political party in San Francisco that year. Is Mr. Phillips referring to Democratic National Convention of 1960, which took place in Los Angeles? . . .

Michael C. Tobriner
Harvard Law School
Cambridge, Massachusetts

To The Editor of Commentary:

. . . I think that Mr. Phillips has captured the spirit of our feelings of disgust and impotent rage at a spectable which makes a mockery of the democratic process. . . . [But] the candidates do not pervert the

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electoral system; we the voters have, with our "gut reactions" to the candidates. Our electoral system is based on the assumption of the rational voter and the thrashing out of the truth through honest debate of the issues. . . .

I think that the different instances cited by Phillips (e.g., the characteristics of Kennedy's candidacy, rape in the Archives, bipartisan bookies under the State House dome) do not have any single cause, but rather a complex of causes, whose eradication would call for a vast revamping of our political structure, in ways which might well be inconsistent with parts of our democratic ethos. . . .

When the voters feel that bread-and-butter issues are not of primary interest in an election, the personal qualities and other "non-issue" concerns are valid considerations. This rule could be broadened into a rationalization or cover for "gut reactions," but, if its spirit is followed, I think it is valid. . . .

LAURENCE J. GILLIS
Harvard University
Cambridge, Maassachusetts

MR. PHILLIPS *writes:*

I am grateful to Mr. Gillis and Mr. Tobriner. (Of course the 1960 Democratic Convention was in Los Angeles; I wish I'd been a better proofreader.) To Professor Blackwood, a distinguished scholar of Massachusetts politics, I am especially thankful for providing the opportunity, which I should otherwise have taken for myself, to apologize to the Archivist of the Commonwealth. I did not mention his name but I did confuse his office with that of the Legislative Document Room, also situated under the State House dome, whose custodian was fired as an "amateur handicapper." That, my most egregious factual error, I did not catch until after the piece had gone in haste to meet the printer's deadline. I have since two more: Senator Edward Kennedy declined to join not merely the reform Democrats I mentioned, but the regular Democratic committee of his ward; Mrs. Kennedy, while a Catholic and very beautiful, is not, as was widely assumed, of Irish descent, but English. The publicity she received as "the Green Jackie" was even sillier than I said.

But as for my interpretations, I can't concede Dr. Blackwood any more than his right to dispute them. Far from an analysis, pseudo or otherwise, I attempted to give no more than a cartoon impression of last summer's campaign in Massachusetts. I had hoped that it would be apparent to a Ph.D. in Government and one of the burgeoning, fascinated corps of special scientists who try to make sense of the ineffable politics of the Bay State. But when he calls the piece "somewhat surrealistic," Dr. Blackwood is, but for the qualifying adverb, exactly right: my impression of that politics was surrealistic. I am not Dr. Blackwood's student, I must make my own interpretations. I have an obligation to facts, to correct factual errors, and surely to malign no man, but beyond that I am on my own. Dali's limp watches oozing over the desert were perceived as watches nonetheless.

"As usual, we find the viewpoint of. . . ." It sounds as if the professor were writing on the blackboard with a squeaky chalk . . . of *whom?* Oliver Wendell Homes? . . . Those days are done and beyond all threnody, as I'd hope would be implicit. Even if Dr. Blackwood is the first who ever said it of me, to be called a "civilized gentleman bemused by the Anglo-Saxon heritage" is in the context of contemporary culture quite a bit less than complimentary. As usual we find the viewpoint of the civilized liberal stultified by the implications of such a phrase as "Anglo-Saxon heritage." (It dangerously converts into a catch-all for the White Protestant guilts of Calvinism and slavery, shameless exploitation of immigrants, bigotry, reaction, hypocrisy, snobbery—enough to make a genteel Anglo-Saxon liberal squirm, who wouldn't dare say "heritage" without a nervous smile.) As a result there is a serious error of comprehension.

That Dr. Blackwood makes this error is dismaying; maybe he has just confused one lonely writer with a voting bloc. He is an authority on the agonized history or religious and "ethnic" antagonisms in the social structure of what is popularly misconceived to be the seat of genteel Puritanism. Far better than I he knows the peculiar politics which divides and courts voters not according to political ideology as much as the fortuitous circumstance of "heritage." Negroes are 2 per cent of the electorate, followed by a much greater proportion of Jews of Russian and Lithiuanian descent, followed by the Portuguese, Lithuanian, Polish, French-Canadian, Italian, and predominantly, Irish, Catholics; besides there are Greek and Russian Orthodox Catholics, and communities of Lebanese, Syrian, Chinese, and other groups acutely aware of their national origins. The Yankees, as they are locally known, are subdivided by

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some politicians into three levels of affluence and social "status": Swamp Yankee, Straight Yankee (suburban middle-class), and Brahmin. The latter includes descendants of the Essex junto, the codfish aristocracy, the Lodges, Herters, Saltonstalls, and more families identified with the Republican establishment. . . . But "Brahmin," like "pinko" or "beatnik," is a newspaper word which collapses under definition. I believe that "The Boston Brahmin" began as the innocuous conceit of Dr. Holmes, himself "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," for a breed of well-born intellectuals (Henry Adams) whose day was already over. The Unitarians, the Transcendentalists were fading under the mills that took the slave-grown cotton, the factories, railroads, all the forces of a new economy which would use, in plenty of time for the great Irish potato famine of 1845, the cheapest labor it could get; then the tragedy of modern Massachusetts began. Since then the mercantile Yankees, though their numbers diminish under the swelling Catholic majority, have as Republicans only lately lost control of state government, while their hold on the economy is hard as ever. And the old "entrepreneurial spirit" is strong in the generation under forty-five who are deep in the Drive-In and Frozen Custard trade; with precious little time to be bemused by a heritage as remote from the here and now as the quaint little dark Pilgrim fathers you see around Thanksgiving on greeting cards and cocktail napkins, chasing through the corn and pumpkins after a turkey gobbler with those funny old blunderbusses they had. For the writer, however, the actual scene in Massachusetts, as nearly everywhere in the republic, is astonishing enough without his needing recourse to some discredited ancestral bias. As if he had come on his first visit from the back of the moon, he has only to take a raw approach and record his reactions in faithful innocence. If his eye is honest, he has as good a right to wander among "political savages" as they.

## Talcott Parsons, Calvinist

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Bennett M. Berger's article "On Talcott Parsons" [December 1962] was interesting but it failed to get to the root of the Parsonian dilemma. In *The Structure of Social Action* Parsons traced his social theory to the "greats" of the past, Marshall, Durkheim, Pareto, and Weber, but he renounced this pedigree in all of his subsequent writings—not in word, but in deed. He turned the Durkheimian epigram "society is a religious phenomenon" on its head and contradicted the conclusions of Pareto and Weber who specifically acknowledged the impossibility of systematic theory. Pareto (section 2143 of *The Mind and Society*) said that systematic theory was impossible because the data by which to solve the problem of society were inadequate, the ends of the actors were unknown, and Weber chimed in ("Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions," *From Max Weber,* p.352) that "There is absolutely no 'unbroken' religion working as a vital force which is not compelled at *some* point to demand the *credo non quod, sed quia absurdum*—the 'sacrifice of the intellect.'" Thus Parsons's own explanation for his work is shot through with contradictions which obscure its real source, which is not the world of science and free thought, but the underground of superstition and dogma. Parsons, unfortunately, is a mere apologist for Calvinism (See *The Structure of Social Action,* p.248), whereas Weber gave his life to expose the evil and the good that it had brought into the world. But try as he may he cannot escape Weber's damning conclusions (*From Max Weber,* p.124 and the concluding comments of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*) which prompt the convoluted reasonings that constitute his social theory and the confused cries of his conscience.

Selwyn G. Geller

Knoxville, Tennessee

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# BOOKS IN REVIEW

## DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

THE PARADOXES OF FREEDOM. By SIDNEY HOOK. *University of California Press. 152pp. $4.95.*

*Reviewed by* LEWIS A. COSER

THE THREE interrelated chapters of this book elaborate a series of lectures which the author delivered at the University of California. They all address themselves to some currently much debated issues in constitutional law.

The first chapter consists of an extended analysis of, and polemic against, those who, like Justice Black, have argued that there are certain absolute rights embodied in the Bill of Rights which ought never to be infringed under any circumstance. This emphasis on absolute rights, Mr. Hook contends, has been stressed in recent years by those members of the Supreme Court and those liberals who are fearful that democracy might lead to a dictatorship of the majority as drastic in its consequences for freedom as a dictatorship of the minority. They have therefore argued that in order to safeguard basic human rights, and especially the rights of individuals and minorities, it is necessary to proclaim certain absolute standards which can never be abridged. Against this position Mr. Hook uses his customary abrasive logic and brilliant polemic gifts. "Nothing," he argues, "is so stark a fact in human experience as the conflict of rights." The Constitution tells us to maximize both freedom of speech *and* the right to a fair trial. It does not tell us how to choose when the two conflict. Hence critical intelligence is needed in any particular case to decide which of the sometimes conflicting values enshrined in the Constitution ought to be given priority. Absolutist standards in any area obscure the need to balance one set of human rights against another. Legal choices involve the balancing of principle against principle, interest against interest, imperative against imperative. And some of them might be overridden when the balance is finally struck. Hence human rights, far from being absolutes, must in each particular case be evaluated in terms of their consequences on the public welfare. There are no natural rights, only reasonable rights. In the inescapable conflict of rights and duties, of obligations and responsibilities, Mr. Hook concludes this chapter, there can be no absolute obligation except the moral obligation to be intelligent. Intelligence alone can mediate the conflict of all other values and is truly absolute, because, as distinct from all of them, it is the judge of its own limitations. The chapter as a whole is a brilliant example of the logic of pragmatic inquiry in its perennial struggle against those who are engaged in a quest for absolute certainty. But while the bulk of the pragmatists' attack was customarily directed against the conservative upholders of tradition, as in most of Dewey's writings, or against modern authoritarian or totalitarian trends, as in much of Mr. Hook's own earlier writings, Mr. Hook now trains his guns on certain civil libertarians and liberals who, on other issues, may share his convictions and assume positions similar to his own.

The second essay continues the polemical discussion of the position of certain members of the Warren Court and their allies among constitutional lawyers and legal philosophers. What is at issue here is the doctrine of judicial review of legislative action, that is, the assertion, to put it in Justice Douglas's words, that "The judiciary is in a high sense the guardian of the conscience of the people as well as the law of the land. . . . Its decisions are more apt to reflect tradition and first principle [since] it sits aloof and detached from the community. . . ." This position, Mr. Hook argues, sets up the uncertain judgment of nine men above the community and above the two other branches of government. It is fundamentally at variance with a democracy that requires deference to the legislative authority, which alone is responsible to the people. If it were consistently up-



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held, it would mean the end of the "separation of power" and would significantly contract the democratic process. Mr. Hook finds that most justifications of the nullificatory powers of the Court amount in fact to a set of Platonic rationalizations in a new idiom. This new idiom, he says, "is shattered on the truth of the homely maxim that only those who wear the shoes know best where they pinch, and in consequence have the knowledge, and therefore the right, to change their political shoes in the light of experience." Those who deny this are wittingly or unwittingly at variance with the very assumptions of a democratic and self-governing community.

In his third essay the author addresses himself to the nature and limits of democratic resistance to democratic authority. He discusses a variety of cases, from the "Declaration Concerning the Right of Insubordination in the Algerian War" to the Freedom Rides and Sit-ins. Taking issue with Nicola Chiaramonte, who has contended that the principle of disobedience is part of the very essence of democracy since democracy rests on an ever-renewed act of *spontaneous* obedience to law, Mr. Hook argues that this "is false and horrendous doctrine." Democracy rests on the freely given consent of the majority of the governed after full, fair, and free discussion, not on the spontaneous adhesion of each man. Obedience to the laws of democracy by a democrat need not be spontaneous at all; as long as the laws are obeyed, obedience can be as reluctant as one pleases. Mr. Hook is prepared, though, to make one exception here, to wit, "carefully circumscribed acts of civil disobedience." Democratic governments, he feels, ought to respect and try to accommodate *as far as possible* conscientious objectors' moral or religious convictions against war. But he is at pains to stress that they cannot be granted absolute rights and immunities. In the last instance the need to safeguard the whole structure of democratic society has primacy.

The Thoreauvian contention that we should obey laws that conform to our conscience and disobey those that violate it, Mr. Hook argues, overlooks the fact that conscience is always an individual matter. "One man's conscience is another man's abomination." Democracy is not anarchy. To a democrat there is a presumption of validity in any law passed by democratic process. Hence alleged "rights to revolution" are a contradiction in terms within a democratic polity. One may conceive of many instances in which a democracy has violated its own institutional presuppositions, but as long as the community as a whole can still be regarded as democratic, no revolutionary opposition to it can be justified. Mr. Hook is prepared to grant a carefully hedged and neatly circumscribed right to certain types of non-violent disobedience. But even here, if individuals refuse to play within the rules of the democratic game on the ground that these rules cannot apply to the great issues that are at stake, they are free to act as if they were at war with the democratic community, but democrats are just as free to crush them. In the last instance, when all is said and done, Mr. Hook here as elsewhere comes down on the side of the democratic community against the claims of the voice of conscience.

MR. HOOK'S approach in this book, as in most of his other writings, is that of an *homme moyen raisonnable*, aware of the gravity of the times, yet characteristically optimistic as to our chances of somehow muddling through. Even the cataclysmic events of the last decades have not led him basically to modify the democratic faith of his mentor, John Dewey. Leaving the twice-born to their preoccupations with evil and the absurdity of the human condition, this truly once-born clings to a healthy-minded faith in the redeeming powers of intelligence. Let others despair and gnash their teeth, Mr. Hook is still ready to offer Two Cheers for Democracy.

Reasonableness and optimism are assuredly most admirable virtues, but they may all too often degenerate into mere smugness, and a rose-colored lens may obscure true vision as much as when things are seen through a glass darkly. Take Mr. Hook's often repeated references to democratic process, the powers of the community, the will of the majority. All these grand phrases obscure the many facets of the devolution of democracy which this generation has witnessed abroad as well as in the United States. De Gaulle's recent inauguration of a "constitutional monarchy" by the mandate

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of a majority; the fact that the most significant advances in race relations in the United States have come from the Supreme Court or as after-effects of "civil disobedience" and not from "the people's representatives"; the fact that the "will of the majority" in the Senate is constantly flouted by coalitions of Midwestern backwoodsmen and Southern racists entrenched behind the principle of seniority or senatorial prerogatives—all these and many more lead one to question the very principle of democracy as it is institutionalized in the West. Democracy has again become a problem. Maybe the Court has "usurped" certain functions which ought to belong to the "people's representatives." But the fact is that its 1962 reapportionment decision has great potentialities for a democratization of the American polity, while the chances that the "people's representatives," especially in the South, would pass a reapportionment law were virtually nil. And is it not true that the absolutists on the Court, even if we grant that their political philosophy stands on somewhat shaky grounds, have in the concrete been a stronger moral bulwark against McCarthyism and similar phenomena than a legislature and executive who for a long while watched with passive fascination, if not active enjoyment, the antics of the late Senator from Wisconsin?

When a highly bureaucratized and organized Establishment increasingly dominates the political decision-making process in America, and a disorganized, apathetic, and manipulated citizenry seems unable to check the drift, need we not regard with much more sympathy than Mr. Hook can muster those intrepid souls who attempt to stem the drift in the name of conscience? It is of little avail to confront the individual dissenter with the ideal or the myth of democracy. He doesn't oppose abstract democracy but its concrete disfigurement by the men of power. The French intellectuals around Sartre did not attack an ideal French democracy, but de Gaulle's plebiscitarian mockery of democracy; the Freedom Riders did not oppose Mr. Hook's reasonable standards of arriving at majority decision, they opposed the exclusion of large masses of Negro citizens from the exercise of their political and social will. One need not share the apocalyptic visions of C. Wright Mills in order to find Mr. Hook's image of the democratic process in contemporary America seriously deficient. And if it *is* deficient, then unfortunately a great deal of his urbane and reasonable disquisitions in this book lose much of their incisiveness. Perhaps the realities of power in America are such that more is needed to set things aright than the gentle play of critical intelligence.

## A FEW OLD JEWS

COAT UPON A STICK. By NORMAN FRUCHTER. *Simon & Schuster. 254 pp. $3.95.*

*Reviewed by* ROBERT ALTER

AT A POINT in time when the East Side ghetto has faded in the consciousness of most younger American Jews to a blurred recollection from their parents' childhood, it seems just a little improbable that an American Jewish writer should take as the subject for his first novel the aged sexton of a dying synagogue on the East Side. Norman Fruchter's treatment of the traditional Jewish milieu, however, is new in mood, method, and aims. Since the late 19th century, writers who have described Old World Jewish life have been interested in recapturing from the ghetto something distinctive that was not available outside—whether a folk ethic and character (Sholom Aleichem), a set of spiritual values (Agnon), or simply one highly particular background for a varied American experience (Bellow). As a result, most fictional representations of Old World Jewry tend to emphasize its lively idiosyncrasies, its exotic appeal, its colorfulness. Fruchter, on the other hand, deliberately avoids most kinds of color. This is even literally true, for almost every scene in his novel is rendered in chill grays, with accompanying tones of somber black. The bleak lives of his handful of old men seem to interest Fruchter largely because they—and the whole pattern of existence which shaped them—are so near their end. The ghetto for him is not so much a special case of the human condition as an extreme example of it, an opportunity for looking more closely at man, the creature whose existence in general is a more or less self-conscious process of dying.

Fruchter's fine ability to evoke sensory

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experience makes this process painfully immediate to the reader. The novel begins with the old sexton in his shabby rented room on the East Side; the language at once forces us to feel what it is like to experience the world through the gummed and aching senses of a sick old man. Fruchter manages to convey, for example, not only the visual blurring, but also the undercurrent of insecurity and projected fear, in a myopic's view of the other side of the street: "The windows . . . across the street stared back at the old man, black-smudged sightless squares cut into formless gray blocks." As Fruchter uses metaphor in this way to fix the experience of the senses, he repeatedly uses such experience, or kinesthetic imagery, as a means of rendering emotional states. A peripheral awareness of sadness becomes a "splinter" sticking to a corner of the brain; the fear of death is "a prickly crawling feeling moving downward into the buttocks." Everything has such immediacy that the old man's hallucinations seem almost as real to us as to him, down to the manure stains on the sleeve of his first spectral visitor. Both the old man's world —its dirt and stench and shabbiness—and his experience of it—his pain, his obtuseness—impinge upon our awareness with a kind of stubborn upleasantness. Unlike the dirty beards and body odors in a writer like Mendele, the unpleasantness cannot be totally escaped by leaving the ghetto behind. Out in the American suburbs, the novel suggests, surroundings may be more antiseptic, but there is no easy escape from either the general drabness or the human condition of misery, for which the East Side squalor offers merely an exaggerated dramatic background.

It is something of a relief when the narrative periodically switches from the consciousness of the protagonist to interior monologues in the surrounding characters. Here the writer reveals another kind of novelistic talent. Viewed from the outside, his characters are a gallery of grotesques; we remember his characters partly as we remember those of Dickens—because of their very oddness. But these are Dickensian caricatures seen and felt from the inside. The best of Fruchter's interior monologues create a sense of barely glimpsed inner perspectives beginning to unfold. I cannot recall a recent novel where I have so often been drawn into wanting to know much more about the characters than the narrative reveals: Zitomer, the candy-store prophet who remains an engagingly unpretentious, self-ironic Jew even after his "revelation"; Dawidowsky, the superannuated Communist agitator for whom "ideas are worth something even if they don't accomplish nothing"; Rabinowitz, the beauty-loving cripple who curses God twice but is thankful for life; Rabbi Davis, an Orthodox Jewish descendent of Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor, who has given up trying to make people better, yet is still "not prepared to trade . . . that indefinable essence [of himself] for a set of prefabricated insides." Fruchter has the ability to capture the essential rhythms of dialect and to build from them, without affectation or exaggerated mannerism, a kind of unassuming poetry, so that the most briefly treated characters—a Negro cleaning woman, a newsstand owner, a gravestone cutter—come alive as the narrative touches them. By contrast, the one "normal" character, the old sexton's Americanized middle-class son, seems flat. It is hard to say whether this is simply a failure in characterization, or whether this deliberately ordinary figure merely looks pale because he is set in a world of characters so out of the ordinary.

IN ANY CASE, the characters live for us as they do, not because of their creator's literary attainments but because of his moral sensibility. For Fruchter, every human being is immensely important because every human being is, in traditional religious terms, a unique soul freighted with the responsibility for its own salvation or damnation, whether or not it is willing to assume that burden consciously. And the novel is characteristically Jewish in envisaging this judgment of the soul here and now, not hereafter. Hell (as with the old man) and beatitude (as with Zitomer) are in this world. But the inevitable Christian translation of such terms in English makes them sound too melodramatic. The old man and Zitomer are judged, but not irrevocably, not with trumpet flourishes and clashing cymbals. Even Zitomer, who experiences a "conversion," continues in an everyday fashion to be what he was, does not die to his old self.

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What ultimately gives depth to Fruchter's characters is the rare compassion with which he conceives them. The protagonist of the novel is the most unlikely object for compassion: he is a dirty old man, a mean-spirited cheat, liar, and thief, excessively proud and vengeful, not even very intelligent. Yet he has enough human sensibility to suffer, he performs one act of self-sacrificing charity, and he is finally touched with some concern about the rottenness of his moral life. We begin to realize that the author, who invented this character in all his malodorous hatefulness, also *cares* about him. The old man has spent his life making himself into an obnoxious thing, but in the author's world no one totally forfeits the hope of following Zitomer, who "at fifty-six . . . stopped being a thing and became a man."

Fruchter's compassion never crosses the line of mere pity. Both he and his characters have their eyes too sharply on the object for any sentimental distortion to take place. This is one of the functions of the abundant naturalist detail in the novel. And the tough-mindedness which makes itself felt in descriptive technique is reflected as well in the wry humor, the distinctively Jewish self-irony, with which the characters guard themselves from the absurdities of their own emotional excesses. Thus Zitomer, the prophet, putting all the seriousness of his life behind his plea for morality can say, his storekeeper's bargaining instinct unblunted by his prophetic zeal, "Ten Commandments, and the first one doesn't even tell us to do anything."

The whole moribund community of Orthodox Jews is itself an invitation to sentimentality which the writer resists. In the novel, this community represents the way of life created through all the ages of Jewish history. That way of life is dying in America, but Fruchter does not allow himself the luxury of tears, for he is far too aware of how a Jew's sense of belonging to the Jewish past persists and demands that he somehow come to terms with it.

But the tension between the Jewish past and present, dramatized in the relationship between the old man and his son, simply shapes the background of the narrative and is not its subject. In the leering gargoyle figure that Fruchter has chosen for his protagonist, he tests a universal moral idea: how much can a man trample upon his own human image without effacing it entirely? The predicament of being, or being a man, is put here in terms of being a *mensch*. And Fruchter has worked the Yiddish restating of the moral idea to full advantage. The world of *Coat upon a Stick* is at some points grim and depressing; in the vicinity of the hallucinated old man, it can become frightening as well. But it never invites despair because Norman Fruchter's sure sense of a people and its past continually suggests that it is not only necessary but also possible to become a *mensch*.

## TV AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON BROADCASTING. By SIR HARRY PILKINGTON and others. *Her Majesty's Stationery Office. 342 pp. 18 shillings.*

*Reviewed by* PAUL BRESLOW

THE PILKINGTON REPORT is a long and repetitive amalgam of Fabian tract, aristocratic bias, puritanical concern, New Left polemic, and technical jargon produced by a committee of private citizens who had been authorized to observe and ponder the condition and influence of British broadcasting. The composition of this eleven-man body was as diverse as one could expect: Sir Harry Pilkington, the chairman, is a glass manufacturer; his colleagues included a professor, a trade union official, a football player, Joyce Grenfell, and Richard Hoggart. Published last June after two years of hearings and deliberation, its findings are couched in a gritty and chatty bureaucratese which does not prevent them from achieving at several points a maximum degree of provocation. This is particularly true of the findings that deal with commercial television, where the Committee apparently wished to exceed its authorization and challenge the very existence of the new channel. However, the Pilkington report is provocative enough throughout, for it amounts to the first really serious recognition by a democratic government of the powerful influence that commercial television exerts upon public values.

It is clear that this recognition had to be

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**Foreword by Dr. William Menninger**

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established against the will of many of the leaders of that government. The Conservative leadership seemed at first to reject the Committee's findings amid the general outcry that followed its publication, which was perhaps best expressed by the *Economist*'s protest against its "illiberalism and restrictionism and censorship." The shouts in the popular press against "Big Brother" were echoed by critics who found an excessive moral earnestness in the recommendations of the report. It was pointed out that the Committee had listened to testimony from organizations such as the Association of Head Mistresses, and that it was unnecessarily suspicious of the frivolities that people enjoyed. In time a more reasoned reaction was expressed, and the government itself came to agree with a number of the findings. Once the smoke had cleared, there was no question that the Pilkington Report had made the idea of political responsibility for cultural welfare into a real issue.

Certainly, some of the complaints were quite justified. The Committee does seem to have an excessive fear of the malleability of British children, it rumbles vaguely about sex, drink, and "kitchen-sink" drama, and it gives to the BBC something approaching an absolute endorsement. But the most important of its 120 recommendations consist of its reactions to commercial television, and these must be instantly intelligible and wholly welcome to anyone who has experienced American television. The fact is that the level of programming on ITV is not markedly superior to American broadcasting. Much has been made of an innocuous commercial program on which Malcolm Muggeridge gossips with celebrated persons, and of another series in which politicians briefly scream abuse at one another, but I could see little reason, except for an occasional elegance of rhetoric and the absence of David Susskind, to prefer these ventures to our own. The few notable exceptions have been in drama and documentary, especially those issuing from the contractor known an Granada Television. These infrequent undertakings are perhaps more ambitious than the local product and are evidently less absurdly policed; but the same can be said, with wider reference, of the BBC. There is nothing on British or American commercial television to rival the BBC's "Monitor" in general coverage of

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the arts or its "Panorama" in public-affairs presentation, and there are few makers of documentary films anywhere to compare with Denis Mitchell. Recently, the BBC has begun a regular satirical program, "This Was the Week that Was," which, by all reports, is as wittily hard on the supposedly established rulers of Britain as American networks are on—whom?

Defenders of ITV have considered that competition is wholesome, that the commerical channel presents "what people want," that it is not so subservient to the priorities of the rigid class structure, and that it is more open to dissenting political opinions. It is certainly true that ITV seems to have the preponderance of quiz shows, Westerns, murders, and Professor A.J.P. Taylor; moreover, many of its light programs draw a much larger audience than the BBC: ITV commissions surveys to prove this, but, unlike the BBC, does not seek to learn its audience's opinion of its worth.

THE Pilkington Committee meets this defense within the structure of an argument that is built on the limiting technical fact that very few additional TV channels are available to the United Kingdom. "The limitation emphasizes the need for all those services to be good," says the Committee, and it proceeds to elaborate in general, and by the examination of certain categories of programs, its concepts of the purposes of broadcasting. It rejects the notion of providing "what the public wants"; we all share our tastes with different minorities, we are individuals and not a uniform mass, and "no one can say he is giving the public what it wants, unless the public knows the whole range of possibilities which television can offer and, from this range, chooses what it wants to see. The subject matter of television is to be found in the whole scope and variety of human awareness." Nor is it possible to say that TV should mirror society; a mere reflection would not show "the whole range of worthwhile experience" because "only the most common experience would show large enough for recognition." The report disparages the fashionable idea that the mass media do not really influence people; the nature of society itself may be altered by television, it says, and broadcasters have a special obligation to focus on "the growing points" at which "the challenges to existing assumptions and beliefs are made. . . . If our society is to respond to the challenges and judge the claims, they must be put before it."

Convinced of the immense power of TV, the Committee felt obliged to deal with certain of the complaints made about existing programs. There is too much violence, the Committee was told, and too much immorality in general. The report takes the violence with the utmost seriousness. While rejecting censorship, it approves of the BBC code of practice governing violence ("Torture is normally inadmissible. . . . Coshes, knives, whips and bottles are more suspect than revolvers, rifles or swords, because they are more easily available") and deplores the lower standards of ITV. Its main concern is with violence during those hours when children are likely to be watching, and it is careful to distinguish between material that is gratuitously sensational and that which is artistically justified. It objects, too, to the possible inculcation of "an unfeeling or cruel disposition of mind." The vagueness of the Committee's discussion of these questions suggests not so much the priggishness of which it has been accused as its concern that moral issues should be "fairly put and fairly answered"; it did not ask that these issues be disguised, but rather that they should be intelligently disclosed and not represented as conclusively settled for the worse. (One notes in the BBC code on violence, with the usual shrug of recognition, the statement that "Scenes of physical violence are an almost invariable ingredient of all American importations other than comedy or musical shows" and that in many American crime series this "is inserted extraneously for depraved effect.") Along with violence the Committee deplored triviality, the pointless exploitation of "personalities," the false morality of quiz programs, the complacency of pseudo-controversy. In all these faults, the Committee found commercial television egregious. In addition, the advertisements on commercial TV were themselves suspected of furthering snobbish values and of spreading misinformation.

The usual American reaction to such complaints, if it is not to dismiss them, is to propose a regulatory commission or further competition. The Pilkington report

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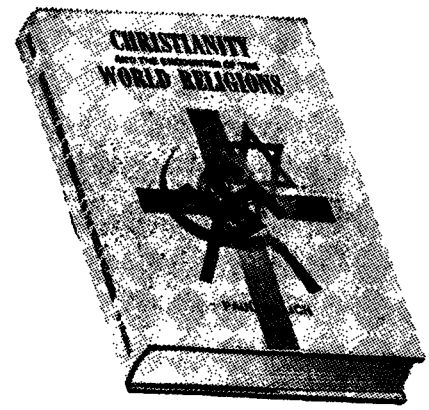
examines both alternatives: it rejects further bureaucratic regulation as impracticable, and it rejects extended commercial competition as self-defeating, for rival producers would simply compete for the largest audiences, worst programs, and most advertising. Here the Committee's most persuasive evidence is a listing of the programs available to New York viewers during the peak viewing hours on Tuesday, December 13, 1960; it is the familiar stew of thrillers, Westerns, and wrestling, with the addition of two plays. By contrast, the BBC devotes an average of one third of its peak time to "serious programs," in which category it does not include plays. There is much more live and taped drama on British TV than on American; though the Pinter, Osborne, and Beckett productions have been exceptional, they have been there, and not only on the BBC. British television allows more experiment, verbal eccentricity, snobbery, and leftism than does American, but less violence, psychosis, and social mobility.

The Committee's preference for the BBC led to the recommendation that an additional channel should be controlled by it and not by commercial interests. But the real cause of the uproar in the press was the proposal to alter drastically the existing arrangements of commercial television. There were some to whom the Pilkington reforms sounded like a confiscation of private property. Actually, the report says the Committee wants to give real meaning to the notion of competition, and that it wishes "to apply the incentive of profitability to the production of the best programs." It would do this by making the ITA (now merely a transmitting agency) into a responsible body that would plan the programs and sell the advertising. The program companies (there are four major and eleven minor ones), which now sell advertising and control the programs, would be confined to producing material for sale to the ITA. Since they would be guaranteed only a minimal amount of sales, they would be expected to compete in their program quality.

The simplicity may not be suited to the American situation, in which producing companies do in fact compete to some extent for the favor of networks and advertisers, with more or less unpleasant results. Yet it is sound in principle; if commercial

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broadcasting is to exist at all, there is no reason why it must be maximally open to corrupting influences, and it is altogether desirable that the producing function should not depend on the advertising interest. The issue is larger than that of profitability: it involves directly the question of social power, it demands reflection upon the nature of freedom in an area of technologically determined oligopoly, and it challenges the cultural neutrality of the political apparatus.

Unfortunately, we have not even recognized the existence of the problem. One searches the FCC reports in vain for some clue to the value of our mode of broadcasting. There appears to be no purpose to it at all, except profit and the nebulous notion of grandeur through limited public service; it is certainly not "free." Even Mr. Minow seems to be promoting local trash at the expense of network trash: it is a more democratic arrangement. As Telstar zoomed through space, speeding to the world its great vision of buffalo and Grand Canyon, baseball and the price of gold, we were reminded that we killed the buffalo, commercialized baseball, and sanctified gold. Which leaves us with the Grand Canyon, CBS, and NBC. And ABC.

## FINANCIAL PAROCHIALISM

THE NATIONAL WEALTH OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE POSTWAR PERIOD. By RAYMOND W. GOLDSMITH. *Princeton University Press. 434 pp. $12.50.*

*Reviewed by* DAVID T. BAZELON

SOCIETY AND STATISTICS grow together, the one in size and the other in importance. This is one of the larger meanings of living in a mass technological society. The sad fact of the matter is that we know each other by type and category, and as contributors to the figures in one column or another. The rest is for novelists and poets (who are having a great deal of trouble keeping up with the figures). Of course, the transcendence to abstraction required by this situation most of us accomplish only spottily—and without the necessary periodic effort at checking our figures and categories. Still, the statistical fact (for instance) that Negroes earn less

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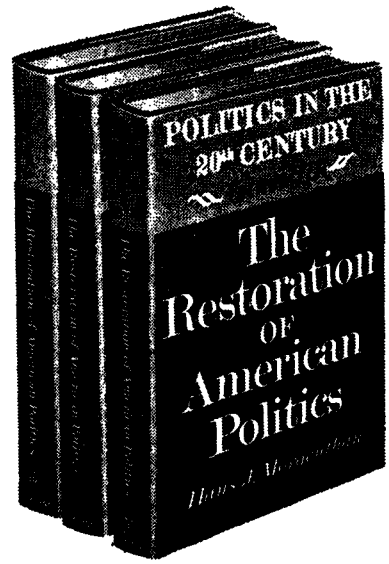
than whites, when joined with the companion statistical fact that Negroes do not live as long as whites, affords the kind of argument to racists that is an inimitable achievement of abstraction, and that can be answered only by a further retreat into the dark recesses of racism. (At this point, one returns to the novelists and the poets).

The beautiful title of Raymond W. Goldsmith's new book of statistics is, I believe, well merited. Mr. Goldsmith is associated with the National Bureau of Economic Research, a very special, high-level organization of scholars and other important people. And he is the author (perhaps a better word for work like this would be creative director of production) of some very basic studies called *A Study of Saving in the United States* and *Financial Intermediaries in the American Economy since 1900*. The current volume is exceptionally basic, too, consisting of 110 pages of text and primary tables, 112 pages of supporting tables, and 207 pages of fundamental supporting tables. The subject is how much and what kind of tangible nonfinancial wealth there is in America: the book is, in effect, the best or the only or the most comprehensive—or all of these—*balance sheet of the nation.*

Mr. Goldsmith's major finding is this:

> The national wealth of the United States (i.e., the aggregate value of all tangible nonmilitary assets located in the United States plus net foreign balance), measured so far as possible by the market value of the assets or the nearest approximation to it, has increased in the postwar period from about $575 billion at the end of 1945 to just over $1,700 billion at the end of 1958, or at an annual rate of fully 8½ per cent. Wealth per inhabitant thus has more than doubled from $4,100 to $9,800, a rise by almost 7 per cent per year. . . . In constant prices of 1947–49, aggregate national wealth has increased from almost $790 billion to nearly $1,250 billion, while wealth per head has risen by one-fourth from about $5,600 to $7,100. The average annual rate of growth thus amounts to about 3⅝ per cent for aggregate wealth and to 1⅜ per cent for wealth per head.

These are big figures concerning a big country in boom time (only two recessions during the period, not counting the one it closed with). But an increase in capital since

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1945 of about $10 a month a head—including heads unborn and unworried in that happy year—in the end does not bowl one over; it should have been much more. Indeed, it could have been if we had wanted to be that much more interested in the world our children will live in (which suggests one of the uses, for parents, of a really good national balance sheet).

The "findings" of a work such as this are not really the author's, but more properly occur in the course of attentive study by the reader. One can't really know what they are until some good readers tell us. The author himself found the following large points in his own reading:

(1) Among many long-perspective changes in the structure of our wealth, the "most marked and significant . . . are the decline in the share of nonreproducible wealth [land, etc.] and the increase within reproducible wealth of equipment, both producer and consumer durables." (The share of land in total wealth, especially for agriculture, is a measure of national backwardness—agricultural land makes up about 45 per cent of India's wealth, and only 5 per cent of ours.)

(2) The share of government, even including military assets, declined from 30 per cent in 1945 to 20 per cent in 1958. (Over the period, the average value of military equipment was equal to about two-fifths of all civilian producer durables.)

(3) Both our foreign holdings and the stake of foreigners in our wealth are insignificant, which is an important difference between us and most other developed countries. (Net foreign holdings never amounted to more than 5 per cent of our wealth.)

IN DISCUSSING what is involved in the preparation of national accounts such as these, Mr. Goldsmith is both a little plaintive and extremely persuasive. He utters the deep-felt hope that he won't have to do it again all by himself. It seems that apart from a few areas of investigation—especially inventories and agriculture—there is no official and continuous counting of our long-term blessings. This stands in very sharp contrast to income estimation, which is a solidly and elaborately institutionalized field. In rough terms, the difference is between stock and flow, capital and income, production poten-

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tial and production-consumption actuality. We are a very statistics-minded nation, and spend a great deal of talented effort collecting all desired data, both in and out of government; in our business-dominated society, business gets all the facts it wants, at whatever cost. Why, then, this difference? In this frenetically capitalist nation why should we be quite so remiss in our measurement of the real capital?

The answer lies, I would suggest, in the problem of financial parochialism. First of all, the primary interest of business is in assets viewed financially, rather than in real terms. And next of all, knowledge of the actual uses of things—real values—lies on the secondary, production side of an enterprise: it is the province of the engineers and other technical people to know the actual capacity of machines; the controlling financial men are not concerned until a financial issue arises, such as buying a new machine and selling a new product. (The tax system has made the real value of equipment even less significant.) Even the balance sheets of individual enterprises are mostly financial documents, designed to impress or placate the public rather than to mislead production men. The paper world of business enterprise is devoted to profit not production, so why should businessmen keep track of their capacity to produce? (Before and briefly after World War II, the military establishment was interested in such actual capacity and did attempt to catalogue it.)

Meanwhile, we have Mr. Goldsmith's estimates of national wealth, which are presumably the best available—although, on his own statement, not nearly adequate. (The mathematics of the matter is, for this reviewer, too complicated for comment; there is a whole chapter on the algebra, which, with much else besides, I leave to the econometricians.) But some of the problems of method are quite interesting, and even comprehensible to a layman. For example, should livestock be classified as inventory or producers' durable equipment? The latter, says Mr. Goldsmith, "as the relatively long-lived dairy cattle come to account for an increasing proportion of the total value of livestock." So it is not all just a question of a million here, and a billion there. There is, as another example, a disagreement among the experts on whether we


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should put the value of roads and streets on the government side of the ledger, or assume their value to be included already in the market value of adjoining private structures. (The government, so used by business, is frequently ignored or downgraded in economic counting.) The primary national asset *not* included in these accounts—the one that makes all the others possible, meaningful, or worthwhile—is people and their skills. Also air, sunlight, and water. Interestingly, the most durable and the least durable commodities and objects are also not counted—e.g., works of art and food on the table.

Why count? Because we have organized our way of life around these economic proceedings, and hardly even remember any longer what we have sacrificed to them. And further because what we actually have and what actually happens in the real world of economic things is our only guidepost (or bench mark) for manipulating the world of paper. There are two problems: one is *taste* and proportion in what we produce and consume; the other, deeper and more immediate, problem is not to be so dominated by the hokum-reality of financial considerations that we forget where we misplaced the real world. A really good, flexible national balance sheet would also certainly be of assistance to us in our efforts to deal with the issue of non-market justice in an increasingly non-market society. Not even to bring justice about, of course, but just at least to initiate an intelligent discussion of it. Who has what, and why? And how come I didn't get my share?

## GOEBBELS'S NATURE

THE EARLY GOEBBELS DIARIES 1925–1926. Edited by HELMUT HEIBER. With Preface by ALAN BULLOCK. Translated by OLIVER WATSON. *Praeger. 156 pp. $5.50.*

*Reviewed by* WERNER J. DANNHAUSER

TO READERS of history, these diaries of Goebbels will prove disappointing. There is little new historical information to be gained from them, and there are even occasional distortions of the facts we already have. We know, for instance, that during the period spanned by the diary entries—August 24, 1925, to October 30, 1926—the Nazi party was still small and disorganized. But the impression Goebbels gives is the opposite: the entire adult population of Germany seems to be attending the rallies which he describes. Moreover, Goebbels was in no position to impart "inside" information even had he wished to; he was still at this time a long way from becoming "the man next to Hitler." When the book opens, he is a member of the Strasser faction in the Rhineland, "out in the sticks" for the Munich-centered movement; at the time of the final entry fourteen months later, he is about to become *Gauleiter* of a Berlin which is not the stronghold but the Achilles' heel of the movement. It is only from this position that he will begin his rise to prominence. The diaries *do* provide new data on the factionalism within the party—between *national* socialists and national *socialists*—which grew and subsided during this period. But the main outlines of Nazi party affairs in the mid-20's have been known before this, and admirably described by Bullock himself in his book on Hitler. Nevertheless, the book is entirely fascinating.

This is due in large part to the fascination we bring to the figure of Goebbels. I cannot here discuss the meaning and grounds of it, but I know it exists, and especially among Jews. It is compounded by a bizarre nostalgia we have begun to feel even for the *terrible* past. Goebbels was, after all, not a fictional character, but terribly real, and the diaries promise to tell us what this monstrous man "was really like." The reader welcomes the very badness of the book, which proves it to be genuine and not written for publication: nobody could possibly *choose* to appear this way in print.

These journals reveal Goebbels as an abominable diarist. A good diarist is one who makes his journal the battleground of a genuine struggle for self-knowledge, or an austere man who uses the occasion to settle accounts with himself, or a genius for whom a journal is a playground, sometimes the place where he fashions masks. In good diaries, therefore, one expects poignant reflections on the quest for sincerity (which often take the form of reflections on diary-keeping), or the genuine self-reckonings of the ascetic, or the aphorisms and witticisms which are the spon-

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taneous overflow of a great mind. Very few of these things are to be found here. There is no struggle for self-knowledge, but rather the empty praise of struggle (if only because of the title of Hitler's book) by a man who thinks he knows what and who he is: tragic figure in a hostile world. There are no austere reckonings, but endless recitals of activities. And his remarks are so far from brilliant that they force one to wonder on what basis so many have agreed that Goebbels, say whatever else you will, was a genius. Is it because we have an Iago complex and assume that evil must always be spectacularly brilliant?

Goebbels was a bad diarist who wanted to be a good one. The result is a parody of a good diary, a diary of adolescent romanticism. All the conventions of the genre are obeyed: The hero is never alone without being lonely and never in company without being alone; he is never tired but always weary to the breaking point. He is not content or gloomy but ecstatic or wretched; he both fears death and yearns for it, and sometimes imagines himself already dead. He addresses his heart and his soul. "Heart, be silent." "Be still, my soul!" Childhood is bliss but not to be recovered; home is bliss, but one can't go home again. On birthdays he reflects on getting old, and on the New Year he Takes Stock. This is Goebbels's entry on January 1, 1926, in its entirety: "I close the old year. It brought me much joy, much consolation, much misery, much despair. Now I am in the midst of everything. And enter the new state with courage! We have progressed! We must progress infinitely further! The struggle continues!" (Almost 70 per cent of the entries end with exclamation points, and almost 90 per cent contain them.)

The days he describes are remarkably alike. There is always too much work, most of it paperwork. With peculiar German thoroughness the Nazis were determined, even by 1925, to be the best-documented political movement of all time. There is usually a speaking engagement. Goebbels's account of it almost never varies. He notes the size and composition of the audience, the length of his speech (totalitarian speakers invariably talk longer than others), and the response to the speech; he *never* mentions what he said. He likes to call


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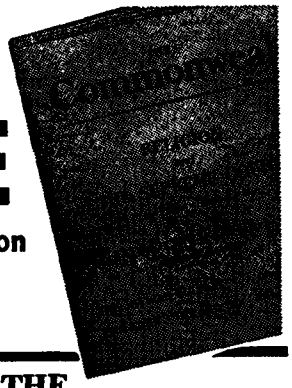

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himself a preacher. A successful speech "inspires" the audience or makes it shudder.

Within this framework one looks in vain for his inner life. One seeks real passion but finds only artificially stimulated frenzy. The woman of the diaries is Else. When he is not yearning for Else to arrive, he is waiting impatiently for her to leave. When he is pleased by her, he realizes that it is because *she* loves *him,* but this, of course, becomes impossible to bear. He regrets his increasing estrangement from his family, but generally after an experience of failure. What is more surprising is that he does not really hate much either. He can scorn or disdain, and is a master of resentment, but there is no great passion in any of it. Jews, for example, are mentioned in the diary less frequently and much more perfunctorily than one would expect. Instead of passions there are moods ranging from the suicidal to the euphoric. But since they change from day to day, and sometimes between the beginning of an entry and the end, and since they are usually devoid of all discernible consequences, one discounts them. He is capable of certain insights, but never reaches the basic one of seeing himself as actor or poseur. Expecting such a man's emotional life to be demonic, one finds it is only drab.

THE LANDSCAPE of his mind is equally dreary. His view of man is simple: man is an animal, a worm, a beast; man is cowardly and lukewarm; man is evil. To the extent that he is not by nature completely depraved, he has been corrupted and degraded by politics. Significantly, Goebbels does not think of himself as a politician. He shares with other Nazis a contempt for day-to-day politics, a contempt that, in the Right wing of our time, is contained in the distinction between the "great" politics of the future and "petty politics," that is, politics as one really knows it. (The distinction is similar to the one the Left makes between making history and making politics.) His political views, such as they are, circle around the opinion that Russia is fascinating (a view he is soon to surrender without anguish) and that workers are more trustworthy than bosses. He has little interest in the actual politics of the Weimar Republic, except that, characteristically enough, he views Locarno, which marked Germany's re-entry into respectability and the Western community, with scorn. Whatever happens in real politics he must find repulsive, since men are beasts whose beastliness is accentuated by politics. At times he insists on playing the Stock Nazi, a volatile combination of sentimentality and brutality. The reader does not at first realize that the "Benno" Goebbels refers to frequently is the family dog, whom he describes in human terms and prefers to human company. He can enjoy riots in which heads are bashed, he can write of a book, "Cruel and great!" but he is also *shocked* to find prostitution rife on the Hamburg waterfront.

He thinks mechanically, that is, in words. The good words are "fanatic" and "revolutionary." The bad words are "waffler" and "philistine." He discovers that Else, his father, and almost everybody in Berlin and Munich are philistines. He reads a good deal, including novels, glorifications of Germany's past, and crackpot books of the extreme Right (Christ as Aryan, etc.). He likes Schubert and Wagner, does not like Ibsen. He is at least formally educated, and can refer to Thomas Mann, Goethe, Schiller, and Kant. His judgments of people are subject to quick change, and not particularly incisive. Thus he recognizes Feder, an economist of sorts who advocated the abolition of "interest slavery," as a crank, but considers Alfred Rosenberg "brilliant." As for Streicher—for whom the label sex pervert is a kindness—Goebbels knows him to be "a sow," but also calls him courageous and honest.

In rare moments the dreariness and repulsiveness of all this are relieved. In a man like Goebbels all minor vices become endearing because they establish his bonds with humanity: we read almost with pleasure that he worries about excessive smoking, ponders his inability to be true to Else, and is given to sleeping all through Sunday. And rarely, very rarely, he shows the qualities of a poet, as when he writes of the Hamburg harbor, "Out there in fog and smoke lie the ships. There is a feeling of the sea and of America." But even at his most appealing moments he is frightening, for the few remaining vestiges of humanity are clearly withering or being squelched.

Yet one must resist the temptation of

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picturing Goebbels as the great cynic or even nihilist, for that is to miss the point. It will not do to characterize him as an opportunist who knew he was evil and enjoyed that knowledge, or as a cynical manipulator who deliberately projected a fraudulent image of Hitler and delighted in his own success, or as the cold man who rode to power with Hitler without believing in him. It will not do because, as the diary shows, he was really enchanted by Hitler, turning to him not for ulterior motives but because he had no basis for judging or resisting him.

Strasser, for whom Goebbels worked in 1925, was a competitor for leadership of the party. Hitler opposed the radicalism to which Goebbels was at this time committed. The first mention of Hitler in the diaries (August 21, 1925) shows, however, that Goebbels did not blame Hitler for the opposition. Hitler can be criticized only for excessive kindness in not getting rid of bad advisers. On August 29, Goebbels is reading *Mein Kampf*. He finds it "wonderful."

In October of the same year, the factionalism grows bitter, and Strasser fans the flames. On October 12, Goebbels writes: "Letter from Strasser. Hitler does not trust me. He has abused me. How that hurts." On October 14, he shows that this has *not* lessened his reverence, writing of Hitler: "Who is this man? Half plebeian, half God! Really Christ, or only John?" It is all some misunderstanding that would be solved if only he could break through and "get close to Hitler" (October 19). On November 6, the crisis is over because Hitler was friendly: "Shakes my hand like an old friend. And those big blue eyes, like stars."

Alas, the dispute swells up again. Goebbels in involved in proposing a party program which enrages Hitler. This time Goebbels will fight, even though he now has "a number of new photographs of him [Hitler] on my desk" (February 6, 1926). At a Bamberg rally Hitler comes out against expropriating the property of princes, which Goebbels advocated. A break seems inevitable, *the* crisis is upon him. "I can no longer believe in Hitler absolutely. . . . I have lost my inner support" (February 15).

The crisis begins to wane in less than a month. Goebbels reads a pamphlet by Hitler on the Tyrol question, and many doubts are dispelled. In a month, "Hitler is great... I bow to his greatness, his political genius!" (April 13). Six days later Goebbels exorcises his last vestige of independence. Though Hitler "has not yet quite appreciated the Russian problem," what does it matter? For he has "taken me to his heart like no one else . . . Adolf Hitler, I love you, because you are both great and simple.

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A genius" (April 19). Only in connection with Hitler does Goebbels speak of love, and he does so frequently.

When Goebbels receives the greatest of all possible gifts, a few days with Hitler in the mountains, he is captured forever. He will go to Berlin, because Hitler wants him to go. He does not even resent Strasser's opposition, treating it as understandable envy. On July 24, he records a day spent listening to Hitler: "He is a genius. The natural creative instrument of a fate determined by God. I am deeply moved." At night, Hitler's words sound like prophecy: "Up in the skies a white cloud takes on the shape of the swastika. There is a blinking light that cannot be a star."

That is what Goebbels was "really like." He is neither cynic nor opportunist, for he shows a capacity for selfless devotion that could not possibly be faked. We do not seem to have the proper categories for understanding such a man: to know what he was like is not to understand him. We have only a terrifying clue which the word "selfless" gives us. We work from the surface through a maze of moods and thoughts only to find that the periphery conceals a dead center. In his own words, he has no "inner supports." Goebbels is the man with *nothing* in his soul, and hence there is nothing to understand, except that the man with nothing in his soul is the ideal vessel for that most evil of men, the man with the lie in his soul—Hitler. One can never wrong an empty man enough, but it is an error to attribute to him motives like treachery. We should have known that the celebrated propaganda triumphs of the later years could not have been perpetrated by a cynical man.

Goebbels was fulfilled by Hitler, literally *filled full*. His real intelligence, or cleverness at least, was never directed to seeing Hitler as he was. There was no self to direct it. History bears us out. Though Hitler never completely trusted him, it was Goebbels who proved to be the one trustworthy man in Hitler's inner circle. Only Goebbels chose to remain in the bunker with Hitler, and to imitate Hitler's suicide. It was the most graceful possible act of a type of man who can exhibit grace *only* under pressure. In his death he showed that such a man is capable of only one virtue, the most terribly ambiguous virtue of all: loyalty.

## Book Reviewers in this Issue

Lewis A. Coser is professor of sociology at Brandeis University and a veteran contributor to these pages.

Robert Alter's "Israeli Writers and Their Problems" appeared in our July 1962 issue.

Paul Breslow is a young free-lance writer who lives in New York. This review marks his first appearance in Commentary.

David T. Bazelon's *The Paper Economy* is soon to be published by Random House.

Werner J. Dannhauser teaches in The Basic Program at the University of Chicago.

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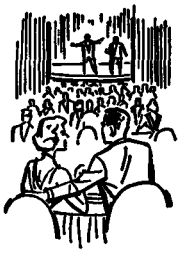

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# Can We Get Off the Road to War?

It is easier to keep on building Minuteman and Polaris rockets as fast as available production facilities permit than it is to devise an adequate agreement on arms control that Russia would be willing to accept; but if we continue to follow this line of least resistance, we shall, before long, reach a point of no return in an all-out arms race.

There are many people within the Administration and in the Congress who are deeply disturbed about the general drift towards war. The Council for a Livable World believes that it should be possible for these people to reach a consensus on what needs to be done. It is one of the functions of the Council to assist in clarifying some of the more complex problems by bringing to Washington from time to time, scientists and scholars with a special competence and interest in these issues.

But even if the Administration may see clearly what needs to be done, it might still have to follow the line of least resistance, unless there were a change in the atmosphere of Congress that would enable the Administration resolutely to pursue a course that could get us off the road to war.

20,000 seriously concerned Americans, *united on attainable political objectives and willing to spend two percent of their income on campaign contributions,* could well bring about the needed change in Congressional attitudes. Based on an average annual income of $10,000, these contributions would amount to $4 million a year. Compared with expenses in a Senatorial campaign that may range from $100,000 in the smaller states to $1 million in the larger ones, this sum is clearly large enough, if wisely spent, to have a profound effect on the composition of Congress.

The Council advises its supporters where contributions should go in order to be most effective. In 1962, the Council, formed in June of that year, recommended to its supporters a slate of three candidates for the U.S. Senate. Campaign contributions in the form of checks, made out directly to the individual candidates, were sent to the Council for transmittal. In this manner, the Council transmitted to individual candidates sums up to $20,000. All three candidates were elected, and in one instance, the Council's support was recognized as crucial.

The Council is currently pursuing a number of concrete and urgent tasks aimed at halting the arms race. If you think you might want to join those who are helping the Council to attain its objectives, please write us and we shall send you further information.

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